

NATIVE LANGUAGE ATTRITION: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY OF THE
PERCEPTIONS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

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By

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Abstract

Background: Language is a medium used by different cultures to protect their traditions and identities. At the university level, we encounter students who strive to become bilingual educators because Spanish is their native language. However, these students often struggle with the academic vocabulary in Spanish even though they entered the U.S. school system with Spanish as their native language. The limited use of Spanish and the limited academic instruction in Spanish, throughout their K-20 schooling trajectory, has led many university level students in the pursuit of a bilingual teacher certification to struggle in passing their Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test (BTLPT). **Purpose:** This research study investigated perceived causes for native language attrition and challenges that bilingual students face throughout their educational careers in the attempt to preserve their native Spanish language. This research addressed the following question: What are the perceived causes of native language attrition for bilingual education students? **Methods:** This study utilized Clandinin and Connelly's qualitative narrative inquiry approach to collect and analyze data. In this study, the researcher acquired evidence of causes of native language attrition through Zoom interviews of three bilingual education students and a personal journal where the researcher annotated reflections and experiences related to self and the participant's stories. The researcher acquired narratives of the stories told by the bilingual education students using two semi-structured individual interviews (lasting about 15-20 minutes in length) and one focus group semi-structured interview (lasting about 30 minutes in length), in which all participants were present. The individual interviews allowed the participants to share

their perceptions of possible reasons for native language attrition and how it has affected their journey as bilingual education students. The focus group, a semi-structured interview with open-ended responses allowed for the participants to share their insights in a collaborative experience. Throughout the study, the researcher kept a journal in which anecdotal notes and reflections were collected based on reflections and experiences that occurred to self and the participants throughout the study. Entries in the journal occurred after each interview, producing a total of seven entries. Each journal entry provided insight on the researcher's own experiences with native language attrition and the struggles of becoming a bilingual certified teacher. The bilingual education students were selected through a purposive sampling design based on their enrollment in a bilingual education program at a local university voluntarily. As John W. Creswell suggests, the researcher retells the information gathered to combine the participants' views with the researcher's lived experiences in what is termed a collaborative narrative. The researcher narrated each of the participants' lived experiences individually, interweaving the researcher's own lived experiences as one of the stories. The researcher then analyzed the data for emergent themes. This study was reviewed by a second educator, who is also a bilingual educator and previously an adjunct professor at a university, in order to remove biases from the interpretation of the data acquired. This investigation allowed the researcher to tell the stories of the three bilingual education students' lived experiences through a narrative approach. **Findings:** The study added to the literature regarding bilingual education students' perceptions of the causes of native language attrition and what bilingual certification programs can do to better support students as they pursue a bilingual teacher certification. From the data, four major themes emerged: 1. Students are

influenced by the environment regarding the use of the native language; 2. There is a need for K-12 schooling systems to offer programs that promote biliteracy; 3. The importance of promoting pride in culture and the native language at an early age; 4. The significance of offering further instruction of the academic language to promote native language development for bilingual education students in the higher education setting. Each finding was substantiated with participants' responses and the personal experiences of the researcher. **Conclusion:** The findings suggested that participants' perceptions of the frequency with which the native language is used lessened the attrition of the native language, which consequently could provide a higher rate of success in the Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Language and identity are inseparably associated with each other (Mercuri, 2012). When we think of language, we might think of a form of communication. It is the way we speak, listen, read, and write. However, language is much more than that. Mercuri (2012) shares that the ability to use a language in a specific context will influence the development of cultural identity (p. 17). The environment in which a person is placed will have an impact on whom they will become. The customs and traditions that they acquire will be highly influenced by the language they speak, which often happens in the United States.

As stated by Mercuri (2012), when an English Learner's native language is devalued, and the dominant language is imposed on all of the students in a school, the English Learner's identity will be threatened (p. 17). Frequently, students are ashamed or scared to utilize their native language because they will not be able to "fit in" with the dominant groups. Furthermore, because the native language of an English Learner is devalued, many English Learners who attend schools in the United States experience the pressure of an *English only* ideology and lose their language and culture altogether (Norton, 2000). The pressure to learn English exists, and students in the United States focus on learning the new language even if it means they will lose their native language.

Language in the Life of an Educator: A Personal Narrative

I never realized that living in a foreign country could strip you away from your language in such a way that it might also take away your culture. I was born and raised in Houston until the age of ten. I am a second-generation immigrant. As a child, I remember

learning Spanish as my first language. My mother and father do not speak English. Before I entered elementary school, I had learned the ABCs and the numbers 1-10 in English from my older brother who had learned English in school. My conversational Spanish was fluid; however, I had not been exposed to academic Spanish only conversational Spanish. When I turned ten, I moved to Mexico, where I continued my schooling career in the fifth grade. I experienced culture shock. I realized that my Spanish was not at the same level as my peers' in age. When I tried to pronounce certain words in Spanish, the other students would make fun of me. I learned that my spelling was consistently inaccurate when I received my work back from my teacher and had so many corrections. I utilized a large variety of anglicisms like "puchar" and "parquear" or "liquear" all which were incorrect and nonexistent in the Spanish language. I also did not understand many of the academic words spoken in the classroom by my teacher or my peers. It was challenging to communicate with my classmates, even though Spanish is my native language. In the United States, I was part of the bilingual program in kindergarten through second grade. In third grade, I was exited from the bilingual program into mainstream English. I had stopped developing my native language in second grade and now that I was in fifth grade, I was expected to pick it back up. That was one of the most difficult challenges I faced. It was at that point that I became determined to learn Spanish the RIGHT way. Even though I lived in a small town, I found out that there was a public library. I checked out books in Spanish and began to read, I have always been a lover of books, and I believe that helped me tremendously. I also began to write down the words that were new to me and learn their meaning so that I could also begin to use them. In my Spanish Language Arts class also known as "La

Clase de Español,” I was determined to pay close attention to everything that was being taught because I wanted to improve my grades. I had no other choice but to speak the language as well. There was no more English, not at home, not at school, not in society. I continued to practice Spanish for the following five years that I resided in Mexico. Later in life, this proved to be very beneficial and a success when I was surrounded by my university-level peers in the United States who were also pursuing a bilingual teacher certification and were struggling to pronounce and write complete sentences in Spanish, although it was also their native language. In reality, it was not their fault. They had grown up in a foreign country where speaking Spanish was not always something to be proud of. Their families wanted them to learn English so they could be successful in the United States. However, through that journey, their language had been lost and thus also portions of their culture. Yazici, Ilter, and Glover (2010) share that parents may encourage the use of the second language at home with siblings and friends with the belief that using the second language more will assist acquisition and success at school (p. 260). This is what happened to many of my peers.

As a graduate of a bilingual education program from the University of Houston, the grand necessity of establishing well prepared bilingual educators has grabbed my attention. As I have begun to impart a course for the preparation of the Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test at the University of Houston Downtown, I have encountered several students who struggle to speak, write, read, and listen to their native language (Spanish). As a result of this, I have decided to further study and research what has caused our students to struggle as they pursue a career in bilingual education and how we can improve our educational programs to support such students.

Mercuri (2012) states that understanding the relationship between culture, language, and identity is important for all teachers, especially teachers who teach English learners (p.14). This dissertation intends to portray the experiences of university-level bilingual education students. I have researched the process that has brought some of these students to suffer from native language attrition. I have inquired about these students' sense of cultural loss. I have also researched ways in which the university's bilingual programs might support the development of a native language in order to become a bilingual teacher.

To complete this research, I have studied the progress of three university students who grew up in different situations, specifically students who only practiced the language when they absolutely had to. These are students who grew up in the United States and experienced language attrition across their schooling years.

Statement of the Problem

Latino children in the United States have experienced language attrition due to not having the opportunity to practice the language in their everyday lives. Even today, the attrition of their native language continues to be a problem. (Mercuri, 2012, p.14). We want bilingual educators, but we are not supporting their native language development. We want our university level students to pass their certification exams, but we take away their native language at a young age. We want our students to be proud of their culture and where they come from, but we shame them for not trying to speak in English.

The university-level students I have chosen to focus on are students who are pursuing a bilingual teacher certification. These students have completed coursework that requires them to speak, listen, read, and write in Spanish. Two have struggled to pass

their Bilingual Language Proficiency Test (BTLPT) and one is concerned about her capacity to pass it. These students have suffered from language attrition across the years and are now striving to become bilingual teachers.

Conceptual Framework

This study's literature review is informed by Jim Cummin's theoretical framework on second language acquisition and the maintenance of the native language. Jim Cummins (1999) defends the notion that the first language (L1) and the second language (L2) CALP are strongly related to each other, and the strong promotion of L1 literacy in school implicates no unfavorable consequences for English (p.5). Therefore, it is understood that L1 and L2 support each other.

Furthermore, Jim Cummins defends that students' English skills do not suffer if provided with less English instruction because there is a considerable transfer of cognitive and academic skills across languages. By less English Cummins means spending less time teaching English and more time teaching content in the native language. One example is that students who have learned how to read in Spanish do not have to learn how to read all over again when English reading instruction occurs (Cummins, 1989, p.113). Therefore, we understand that instruction in the native language at a young age is vital for the success of the whole child. Yazici, Ilter, and Glover (2010) also share that children learn a second language better when they have a good grasp of their mother tongue (p. 260). We understand that students who are learning English do not have to be stripped from their native language because their native language will support the acquisition of the second language.

Cummins (1989) also argues that programs in which students' first language skills are intensely fortified, their school success reveals both the cognitive and academic foundation (p. 113). Cummins (1989) also states that by establishing in depth L1 instruction, these programs also buildup their cultural identity (p.113). This reveals that student success is highly connected with the intensity with which a first language is taught. If a student can successfully develop his or her native language, then they will be able to transfer that knowledge into the second language while also protecting their cultural identity.

This study is framed around the theoretical framework that the extensive development of the L1 highly contributes to the development of the L2. This study also supports the idea that the survival of the native language depends on the environment in which the learner is immersed. Furthermore, this research maintains the idea that the native language will also support the transferability of knowledge into the second language when the native language is allowed to properly develop throughout the learner's schooling years.

Purpose of the Study

Language encompasses many areas in our everyday lives and in our lives as educators. Mercuri (2012) shares, that language is the medium that groups utilize to protect their cultures and keep their traditions existent (p. 14). Baker explains that the loss of language is equal to the loss of culture and identity (Baker, 2001). In schools and in homes in America, we continue to see how students continue to strive to acquire English as a second language while not being provided with the necessary tools to develop their native language.

At the university level, we encounter students who strive to become bilingual educators. However, they struggle with the academic vocabulary in Spanish. According to the Texas Education Agency in their summary statistics for total scores, only 63% of students who took the BTLPT passed in 2016-2017. The information gathered in this research has allowed the researcher to understand the factors that contribute to native language attrition and the challenges university students face throughout their educational careers in the attempt to preserve and develop their native language and culture.

Research Question

This study aims to analyze an adjunct professor's pedagogy in addressing the notion of language attrition in university-level students. The study presented in this research addresses the following question: What are the perceived causes of native language attrition for bilingual education students? Through this study, the researcher aims to analyze the possible factors that contribute to native language attrition in bilingual education students in order to find ways in which bilingual teacher preparation programs can support the development of the academic Spanish language in preparation for their success as bilingual teachers.

Definition of Terms

Native Language: Heritage languages (HL) are the languages spoken by the children of immigrants or by those who immigrated to a country when young (Cho, Shin, and Krashen, 2004).

Second Language Acquisition: The process similar to the way children develop ability in the first language (Diaz, 1988)

BICS: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (Cummins, 1999)

CALP: Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (Cummins, 1999)

BTLPT: Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test (Texas Educator Certification Examination Program, n.d.)

L1: First Language (Diaz, 1988)

L2: Second Language (Diaz, 1988)

Significance of the Study

The United States is known to be a country of immigrants. Packed within them, comes a foreign language, traditions, and a culture from which they are quickly stripped away, as soon as they set foot across the border. According to Strickland (2012), recent data shows that one-fourth of the children in the United States are youths under the age of 18 who have either arrived from a different country or their parents are immigrants. It is known that in several states such as California and Arizona, there are restrictive language policies that remove the use of native languages in schools. Jimenez-Castellano, et al. (2014) state that, the education provided to ELLs in Arizona is very different from other states in the United States. In the year 2000, Proposition 203 (English for the Children) was passed due to the growing number of Latinx English Language Learners. This proposition restricted the use of native languages during instruction for English Learners (ELs).

There have been studies such as Krashen's (1987) and Cummins' (1979) conducted with the lens of second language acquisition in mind. These studies investigate how children acquire a second language. This research study strives to analyze the causes of adult first language attrition. It is specifically geared towards university students who strive to become bilingual educators in a country where they have not had the opportunity

to fully develop their first language. Through an analysis of university-level students' K-16 educational journey, this research will inform the practices of a program geared towards bilingual education teacher preparation.

Chapter II

Review of Related Literature

According to Tran (2010), over the past four decades, immigration has completely transformed local communities and cities in the United States. In 2008, one in eight American residents was foreign-born, and together with their children, they accounted for one in four of the total United States population (p. 257). According to Winstead and Wang (2017), children involved in transnational movements leave their countries along with their culture, their traditions, and their understanding of the language. When they enter the new country with their parents, they are placed in schools and, they are expected to learn the new language, learn the new rules of the country, and have high academic performance (p.1). Students are placed in schools where they are looked down upon because of their limited use of the dominant language and are often shamed because of this. Winstead and Wang (2017) found that because often students' language is restricted or rejected, children begin to feel ashamed not only about their language but also ashamed of their heritage, which in turn affects their performance in school (Winstead and Wang, 2017). Portes and Rumbaut (2001) conducted a study on children of immigrants whose average age was fourteen; all of the students had been born in the United States or arrived by age twelve. The reports from this study found that these teenagers had a higher competence in English than in their native language. Tse (1998) states that some language minority group members go through a phase in which they highly desire to integrate into the mainstream culture, which in turn creates apathy and even rejection of their native language and culture.

It is astonishing to see the effects of shaming upon the lives of individuals. Ambler (2000) mentions that there have been many reasons why native languages have become extinct or have weakened in the past. However, humiliation has been the most significant reason of them all (p. 1) Shaming of a language and culture has caused children not just experience language attrition, but many parents who grew up in host countries to not even teach their native language to their children, thus causing loss of the language because of shame.

This chapter will present a review of the related literature that discusses the causes of native language attrition in immigrant children and children that come from immigrant families K-16. It will also provide an insight into the benefits that maintaining a native language provides.

Causes of Native Language Attrition

According to Schmid and Köpcke (2017) language attrition is defined as the process by which a pre-existing linguistic knowledge becomes less accessible or is modified to some extent as a result of the acquisition of a new language, and L1 production or comprehension are affected by the presence of this other language (p. 638).

Language attrition is occurring more and more in the United States. Many immigrants and their families continue to lose the language of their ancestors. Liang (2018) affirms, that the gradual disappearance of native language is also considered to be an “erosion” of the whole multicultural society (p.66). By shaming a language not only might the native language be lost but also the culture that comes with the language.

Liang (2018) shares that there has been evidence that parents promote native language maintenance to facilitate communication among family members to maintain the family relationships (Liang,2018). This is especially true when referring to the communication between children and their grandparents. Many grandparents of English Learners are usually very limited in English, and therefore, oftentimes, this relationship becomes broken because of language barriers. According to Enstice (2017), it has been shown through research that Latinx parents want their children to maintain their native language. However, they often receive the message that English is more desirable and more valuable than speaking Spanish (Enstice, 2017). Second and third generation Latinx children speak less Spanish and they show a greater desire and comfort in speaking English. Due to this, the ability and desire to use their home language begins to decline, which becomes a massive challenge to Latinx parents who wish to maintain their native language and culture.

Furthermore, the excessive push for newcomer students to acquire a second language has led students to experience native language attrition as they grow older. Cohen and Wickens conducted a study with three students who moved to the United States after having lived in foreign countries where Spanish was their native language (Cohen and Wickens, 2015). From the study, Cohen and Wickens (2015) concluded that, because the English language was so important in their new country of residence, the three women they studied declared that they felt much more comfortable communicating in English than communicating in Spanish by the time they began high school. They attributed their lack of proficiency in their native language to their childhood education being conducted mainly in English (p. 10).

Cho, Shin, and Krashen (2004) share that there exists a term given by Tse (1998) titled Ethnic Ambivalence, which refers to the mixed feelings a person might have towards speaking their native language. There exists no research on how often it happens or the conditions that cause it. However, one hypothesis is the low competence that a person might have in their native language. This might lead to negative feedback from more competent native language speakers. Some speakers of native languages state that they often avoid speaking their native language because other speakers who are more competent in the native language constantly correct them or make fun of them when they speak. This discourages the native language users from speaking the language, which then results in even less competence.

Early studies such as Crawford's (1996) share that various causes exist for native language attrition among immigrants; first of all, younger generations prefer to speak the social dominant tongue. Second of all, the native language use has decreased in environments where it was once secured, for example, churches, cultural observances, schools, and most importantly, at home. The third reason is that we have found that more and more parents avoid teaching the native language to their children (p. 4). The environment in which children are mainly immersed defines which language they use. It continues to be evident that native languages are being lost because the environment in which children are formed pushes them to learn the dominant language, in this case, English, and lose their native language. Crawford (1996) continues to share that language choices are influenced by many factors, consciously and unconsciously. Some of these factors include demographic factors such as in and out migration. Having to leave their country of origin may produce language attrition. Economic forces are another factor.

Better opportunities for employment exist when the dominant language is spoken. The mass media is another force that impacts the use of the native language. Children are constantly exposed to music, video games, television, social media, where they regularly utilize the dominant language and not their native language. Crawford (1996) continues sharing that another factor is social identifiers. This term describes the people that we admire as individuals and strive to imitate. Frequently, children aspire to be like other professionals, which causes them also to choose to utilize the dominant language rather than their native language (p. 57-58).

Crawford (1996) continues to add that language attrition is also caused by changes in belief systems. One of these belief systems is what Crawford (1996) terms as individualism, putting self-interest before community interest. Individuals tend to focus on what will make them successful as individuals, and if this means speaking a dominant language, then that is what they tend to do. Pragmatism is another system of belief termed by Crawford (1996). This belief worries about “what works” and not about defending principles or languages. Individuals choose to utilize English or the dominant language because that is what seems worth maintaining. Materialism is the other system of belief that Crawford (1996) shares, this is the belief that allows consumerism to overshadow spiritual, moral, and ethical values (p. 58).

There are many causes for language attrition and its occurrence amongst immigrants and their families. The United States continues to see an influx of immigrants, especially of Latinx descent. This community of immigrants is filled with people who strive to chase the “American Dream”. This dream is frequently converted into a loss of the native language and culture. Year after year, native language attrition

becomes a reality, and more and more children and generations are losing relationships, background, and culture at the cost of native language attrition.

Benefits of Native Language Development

According to Latham and Stoessel (2017), there is significant research on bilingualism and native language that suggests that the development of the native language is beneficial for both individuals and society. Latham and Stoessel (2017) also share that, the development of the native language may ease acculturation on an individual level and can help preserve relationships in the bilinguals' social network while promoting cognitive and educational development (p. 1). Developing a native language can benefit children in various ways, including the support of cognitive development at an early age.

Cho, Shin, and Krashen (2004) share that there is no reason why native language development should be discouraged. No research supports that native language development harms linguistic or cognitive development. On the contrary, there is evidence that the development of native languages helps cognitive development. Native languages also provide more opportunities for international relations and trade, and they allow the speakers to learn from the older generations. More significant opportunities exist for those who can speak their native language. They can better communicate with people from other countries and maintain relationships with the elderly in their families.

Soto and Kharem (2006) state that, because that the U.S. intelligence sectors strip children from their native language, the U.S. intelligence system struggles to find experts who can speak specific languages or can understand different cultures. These language and culture gifts exist in our classrooms, but students are continuously forced to get rid of

their own culture and language in an effort to become acculturated with American traditions and language and to be accepted by their peers (p.3). School settings continue to promote that in order to be successful, students must speak the dominant language. As a result, many students lose their native languages in the pursuit of the dominant language.

Krashen (1997) mentions that the knowledge that children acquire through their native language allows for the English that they encounter to be more understandable. This is because the literacy that is developed in the first language transfers to the second language. Krashen (1999) explains that because we learn to read by making sense of what is written on a page, it is much easier to learn to read a language that we understand. Once we are able to read in one language, we can transfer that skill into any language.

Cummins (1979) introduces the concept that access to two languages in early childhood education can advance certain areas of cognitive growth (p. 18). This concept conveys that allowing students to access both their L1 and their L2 will not damage their cognitive understanding and, on the contrary, will enhance their mental and intellectual growth. Therefore, allowing the practice of a native language will add to the knowledge that a student might have otherwise had from just one language. The beauty of being bilingual is that both languages can support the learner as they continue their academic endeavors.

One more concept shared by Jim Cummins (1979) is that the success in the development of an L1 and L2 depends on the approach taken by the people that surround the learner. A student who is surrounded by an environment who sees bilingualism as “additive” the L1 was in no danger of replacement by the L2. In other words, when the

L1 is dominant or “prestigious” it was in no danger of replacement by L2. On the other hand, when a learner is surrounded by an environment who sees bilingualism as “subtractive” the L1 was gradually replaced by the L2. Thus, the bilingual learner in an “additive” situation is likely to have high levels of competence in both languages while the learner in a “subtractive” environment is likely to be characterized by less than native like levels in both languages (p. 18). Wiemelt & Welton (2015) also share that culturally and linguistically responsive schools that promote additive bilingual programming, such as dual-language programs, are essential for the development of bilingualism, biliteracy, and educational benefits for emergent bilingual Latinx students (p. 83). This confirms that additive bilingualism is beneficial for student growth and native language development, which is especially true for urban school settings where one might find a diverse body of students.

In a study conducted by Rumbaut and Cornelious (1995), they found that children of second-generation Latinx families who were fluently bilingual had better scores in their academic tests and had better GPAs compared to monolinguals and limited bilinguals. Tran (2010) shares that bilingualism has also been connected to the desire to aspire for higher education, better performance, and attainment of goals (p. 261). Tran (2010) also explains that the use of Spanish with others at home and school has no adverse effect on English proficiency, and it holds a substantial effect on Spanish proficiency.

Ways to Support Native Language Development Among K-16 Students

Teachers that provide students with multiple opportunities to use their native language and constant clarification in their native language throughout instruction can

support the students' acquisition of a second language. They can also help support the preservation of familial relationships of the students as well as their culture. Kibler and Roman (2013) mention that the use of native languages in the classroom, either by the teacher or by the students, is often recommended as a teaching strategy for teachers of ESL students (p. 191). The result from breaking away from a language causes parents of children who only speak their native language not to be able to support their children at home because of the language barrier. Slowly, there have been institutions that strive to create places where languages are safe (Ambler, 2000). Ambler (2000) says, when language is honored, education is also honored. It is important for educators to learn to honor native languages in order to cultivate positive learning environments (p. 1).

Gonzales et al. (2005) state that their Theory of Funds of Knowledge constitutes that households are a great source of culture and learning that can be utilized in the classroom. Students come to schools with an extensive amount of cultural resources that can be used positively in the classroom, language being one of them. Students can benefit from opportunities where they can share their strengths and capabilities through their language and culture. Gonzalez et al. (2005) share three key domains of change that can potentially benefit educators as they teach students with different native languages. The first key domain of Chang is that teachers can develop as qualitative researchers. The second is the importance of forming relationships with families of students. The third key domain of change is that households hold resources that can support social and intellectual skills. If these three changes can be made for all educators, students would have a better chance of success even through the use of their first language.

Teachers could use these native languages to continue to enrich education and foster safe environments for English learners. This allows English learners to continue to practice their native languages in order to enrich the academic setting of students. Reese and Goldenberg (2006) suggest that schools need to make greater efforts to promote native language use in classrooms. They state that it needs to be done not just as a way to measure and facilitate comprehension of school materials by English Language Learners but also as a linguistic resource (Reese and Goldenberg, 2006). It is necessary to continue to foster native languages in order to build upon second languages without the loss of the native language and culture.

Tran (2010) shares that the frequent use of a language has been proven to be the best way to develop a language (p. 278). Tran (2010) connects the Spanish use with parents, grandparents, and siblings with a strong Spanish proficiency and perhaps the best way to develop a native language. Parents can profoundly influence the retention or decline of their native language based on their constant use of the language at home (p. 278). Therefore, the more students practice the language, the more likely they are to develop and maintain the native language throughout their lives.

Stories of Language Attrition

Stories tell us of the experiences of others. Oftentimes, we can relate and better understand students' situations when we hear their stories. Mendez, Perry, Holt, Bian & Fafulas (2018) share that narration of stories is a universal form of communication used to share information, teach lessons, and transmit traditions and beliefs between generations and across cultures, thus providing a natural vehicle for evaluation of language abilities (p. 151). The following are a few of the thousands of stories of English

learners whose native language is Spanish. These stories tell us of their experiences and how their native language has declined over the years.

There is an illustration that Puig (2010) mentions, of a little boy named Manolito. Manolito lived in a home where the spoken language was Spanish. Soon, one of Manolito's cousins, who was in kindergarten came to live in their home. Manolito's cousin only spoke English, which Manolito deemed as "cool". Soon, Manolito only wanted to speak English, though it was evident that he was much stronger in Spanish. It reached a point that Manolito even refused to speak Spanish any longer. Over the next six months, Manolito's English became better, but his Spanish continued to decline (Puig, 2010). This goes to show the impact that children's surroundings have on their language and culture. Manolito is one of many stories of children who refuse to continue to use their native language because of shame.

Orellana (1994) shares three stories of three different children and their experiences in developing a first language and acquiring a second language. In the following paragraphs, their stories will be shortly narrated in order to perceive different situations in which language attrition has occurred.

Elisa is the first child that is depicted. When Elisa was 2 ½ years old she began attending a bilingual preschool. At that time, the only language she spoke was Spanish, although she did understand some English. Gradually, Elisa began to utilize more English than Spanish in her daily conversations and began to show some resistance to the use of Spanish. Orellana (1994) describes that she began to notice this resistance happening when Elisa was exposed to some English only speaking students at her preschool. By the time Elisa was four years old she was only utilizing English with her mother. She also

began to protest the use of Spanish with her parents. Elisa was a blonde and blue-eyed child and her mother shares that she often noticed that she began to receive “unwarranted merit” for looking a certain way and being able to speak Spanish. Orellana (1994) shares that dark-haired Latino children are not applauded for speaking Spanish and in fact, are oftentimes looked down upon for doing so. However, Elisa’s Spanish was admired by people. At 4 ½ years old, Elisa transferred to a different preschool where English was the dominant language, and she was no longer in a bilingual program. Elisa’s Spanish began to decline significantly to the point that she resisted to utilize it not even with her parents. Her parents had switched to a “two parent, two-language” model in which her mother spoke English, and her father spoke only Spanish to her in hopes that Elisa would continue to develop her Spanish. However, Elisa continued to resist the utilization of Spanish. Orellana (1994) shares that Elisa even began to utilize phrases such as “yuck, not Spanish”. Elisa had internalized a negative attitude towards the language. At 5 ½ Elisa was once again enrolled in a bilingual kindergarten where she had exposure to Spanish and children who only spoke Spanish. Her attitudes towards the language began to change a bit again. She started to be a little more willing to use the language. However, at almost 6 years of age her English was far more advanced than her Spanish (p. 7).

Orellana (1994) also shares about Carlos, a child who preferred to speak English and never really started his conversations in Spanish. However, his dad would push for the use of Spanish at times, but Carlos’ ability to communicate in Spanish was limited. When around other children, he initiated his conversations in English. Carlos understood the majority of the messages given to him in Spanish but showed a preference for English. Carlos’ loss of Spanish happened when he entered Kindergarten. His

neighborhood school did not offer a bilingual program, so he was placed in an English only program. He also attended the after-school program, which was all in English. Carlos' Spanish began to decline tremendously because of his limited interactions and practice in Spanish. Carlos' parents have communicated to him that being bilingual will benefit him when he is older and that it is better to know two languages rather than just one. Carlos understood this and tried to utilize his Spanish, but when he could not find the words that he wanted to say in Spanish he turned to English to communicate his ideas (p. 8)

Orellana (1994) also shares about Veronica. Veronica has managed to maintain a greater ability to speak Spanish rather than Elisa and Carlos. Orellana (1994) shares that when she interviewed Veronica in her study, she noticed that Veronica was compliant with the utilization of Spanish, but her Spanish felt unnatural to her. Her English was considerably more advanced than her Spanish. At home, Veronica communicated with her parents in English. Her mother spoke to her in English and her father in Spanish, but Veronica responded in English. The school that she attended delivered instruction in English, and therefore, did not provide sufficient opportunities for her to practice her Spanish (p. 9).

After analyzing these four scenarios, it is important to notice that when children are provided with fewer and fewer opportunities to practice a language they have fewer chances of retaining it in their future. Also, one thing to notice is that attitudes towards language change depending on the environment that the child is exposed to. The environment in which we move highly influences our use of languages. Society has a great impact in the retention and loss of native languages.

Language Ideologies

Society has different opinions on languages. Some people embrace the fact that someone may know a language other than English, while others look down upon people who might speak a different language. Even immigrants themselves have different perceptions of their own language. Some consider their own native language to be less prestigious or less impressive as the dominant language.

Sanchez & Cerecer (2013) share the terms *double linguistic oppression* (p. 197). Double linguistic oppression refers to the fact that many Latinx in the United States consider that Spanish has a lower prestige status than English. Second, many Latinx in the United States consider that the varieties of Spanish and English spoken by many U.S. Latinx from the second generation and beyond are also devalued when they are compared to the standard varieties of these codes (Sanchez & Cerecer, 2013). This means that because some Latinx in the U.S. might not speak proper Spanish nor proper English they often feel ashamed to utilize the languages. There exists a language hierarchy in the United States for Latinx. First, English has power over Spanish and second, standard varieties of Spanish are inculcated with more value and prestige than nonstandard varieties of Spanish (as cited in Sanchez & Cerecer, 2013).

Lapayese (2016) states that in California, language issues are intertwined with race issues. Due to many non-English speakers living within the United States' borders, the passage of Proposition 227, a proposition advocating for English only education, established an English only ideology (as cited in Lapayese, 2016). Many of the monolinguals living in California began to advocate for English only in schools, which in turn provoked Spanish speakers to utilize their native language less and less. Cummins

(1989) shares an interesting theory that states that minority students are disempowered educationally (p. 112). Furthermore, he states that minority students will succeed educationally to the extent that the patterns of interaction reverse those that prevail in society (Cummins, 1989, p. 112). Cummins shares that patterns of disempowerment can be reversed first, if minority students' language and culture are incorporated into the school program, second, if minority community participation is encouraged in a child's education, and third, if the pedagogy promotes intrinsic motivation (Cummins, 1989, p. 112). Meaning that minority students can be empowered, and linguistic ideologies may change if schooling systems take these aspects into account when planning instruction. Menard-Warwick & Palmer (2012) share a phrase by a student who went to study Spanish abroad, *"I feel like being here is a whole different side to learning a language I've tried to learn for years now...being here changes your opinion of everything"* (p. 1). Many immigrants to the United States feel the same way when trying to learn English. It is no longer a theory, but a need and a reality that they must face, which might press them to learn the new language and leave their native language to the side because of the importance that English is given. Arroyo-Romano (2016) shares that decision makers at the district levels are not considering the value of producing bilingual, bicultural individuals, nor are they trying to develop fluency in a language other than English. This continues to be a concern in our education systems today.

Benefits of Bilingualism in Education

In today's education system, we continue to see a debate between English immersion and bilingual education. From the research, it is evident that developing a

native language is beneficial to the success of the whole child. In the following section, we will read about the benefits of bilingual education and native language development.

Butvilofsky, Hopewell, Escamilla, & Sparrow (2017) share that findings indicate that high-quality instruction is as essential as the language of instruction for successful literacy development (p. 25). Oftentimes the focus becomes high quality of instruction. However, it is also important to note that the language of instruction plays a crucial role in the child's success. Butvilofsky et al. (2017) conducted a study utilizing a program titled Literacy Squared. Literacy Squared is a program that emphasizes the importance of building biliterate students. This program focuses on the quality of instruction in both languages to build students who are fluent in both languages rather than just one. The results of this study proved that students in the Literacy Squared program outperformed their English Learner counterparts in both the state and the school district (p. 40). Butvilofsky et al. (2017) also share that a program such as this allows students to develop their literacy skills simultaneously in two languages. This accelerates their English literacy development while supporting their Spanish Literacy development, thus allowing them to become bilingual and biliterate (p. 40). As school systems continue developing bilingual programs, it is important to keep in mind that biliteracy is vital and beneficial not just to English Learners but to students in general. Proper bilingual programs are also beneficial to urban schools, where oftentimes a large number of English Learners are found.

Escamilla (2000) shares that there exists strong theoretical evidence that suggests that teaching Spanish speaking children in the United States to read and write first in Spanish constitutes both sound policy and "best practice" (p. 101). Furthermore,

Escamilla (2000) shares that, an important prerequisite to developing “best practice” programs for teaching literacy in Spanish must include the development of positive schema in bilingual teachers. This schema should relate to how to interpret the development and the usage of two languages in young children in bilingual programs. Many teachers who teach bilingual students believe that teaching two languages is confusing to the children. It is difficult to embrace the teaching of literacy in Spanish if Spanish literacy is perceived as a confusion rather than a source of support. In other words, we need to begin by changing our thought that native languages are a problem and we need to start with our very own bilingual teachers (p. 105). If we plan to develop a language, then we first must understand the importance that native languages play in the lives of our students. If the bilingual teachers are not perceiving this need then it will be difficult to convince an entire system that languages are important.

Escamilla (2000) states that it is important for teachers of Spanish speakers to understand that Spanish speaking children are in contact with both languages (English and Spanish) when they read and when they write, and that they will use English words and cues as they read and write in Spanish. It is important that teachers accept and understand these behaviors and that they are normal and not problematic (p. 108). It is OK for students to utilize both languages as they are learning. It is OK for students to make mistakes when they are learning. It is our job as educators to continue to help them develop the necessary skills to be successful in both languages and not just in one.

As we continue to plan and prepare for the instruction of bilingual students, there are different aspects that we must keep in mind about the differences in the teaching of reading and writing in English from the teaching of reading and writing in Spanish.

Escamilla (2000) argues that unfortunately in most states in the U.S., the teaching of Spanish reading is parallel to the English reading curriculum (p. 109). It is important for teachers and curriculum writers to be aware of the differences between the two languages and to write curriculum that is best for student learning (p. 109). English and Spanish are not the same.

Adult Learner Development of the Native Language

In today's schooling systems, there is a shortage of qualified bilingual educators. The bilingual teacher candidates graduating from higher education programs are frequently struggling to pass their BTLPT (Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test). This exam evaluates the students' capability of reading, listening, speaking, and writing in Spanish. Arroyo-Romano (2016) shares that having qualified teachers in a classroom to support English Learners increases attendance and graduation rates among this group. To become a qualified teacher for a bilingual position a teacher candidate must first complete college coursework, show content knowledge by passing state examinations, and have language proficiency in both English and Spanish (Romano-Arroyo, 2016). Romano-Arroyo (2016) also shares that bilingual education teacher candidates could benefit from bilingual education programs where they can use both languages, where they could read, write, speak, and listen to Spanish speaking faculty, and where instruction could be conducted in the Spanish language. Unfortunately, bilingual teacher candidates are not generally provided with the opportunity to develop their Spanish academic language and therefore struggle when it is time to take a Spanish proficiency exam.

Critical Race Theory and its Connection with Native Language Development

The topic of critical race theory states that racism does not necessarily mean to denigrate someone based on the color of their skin. Lac (2017) shares that Scholars theorize that when teachers negate race or racism in their curriculum, it represents a symbolic violence to students of color and endangers the well-being of all students (p. 2). Therefore, in theory, racism can also be seen as not providing equal opportunities for students of color. Opportunities include being able to talk about their culture and backgrounds, read about their ancestors, or even utilize or develop their native language. Racism can also be seen as the silence that many educators and students hold to disengage from critical conversations around race. Hughes-Hassell, Barkley, and Koehler (2009) share that critical race theory scholars define racism as "a system of privileges that works to the advantages of whites and to the detriment of people of color" (para. 17). A system of privileges could enclose a variety of actions. In our education system, we find that many communities of color do not have the same accessibility to many privileges that white students have. Many schools that serve students of color still do not provide equitable access to higher education. Students of color still struggle to find the necessary means to become successful, and many give up along the way. Ozogul, Miller, and Reisslein (2017) share that given that learning develops cumulatively, in that early experiences have a profound effect on later skill development and one's motivation to learn it is essential to understand children's early beliefs and experiences if we want to change occupational disparities (p. 16). Ozogul, Miller, and Reisslein (2017) also continue to state that gaps in early cognitive proficiencies of children are evident across social class and ethnic groups, as children enter kindergarten (p. 16). It is important for

educators to continue to positively influence the access to learning for all students especially for the students in communities of color. This also means access to learning in their native language.

Latinx students are highly influenced by their surroundings. Equitable access and how it lacks in terms of language acquisition is still true. Many schools offer bilingual education; however, this education is geared towards students acquiring English and not so much the development of their native language. Students are slowly pushed out from continuing to develop their native language, which pushes them out from identifying themselves with their own culture. Students are being underserved not just in exposure to higher education but also in terms of exposure to their own identity through their native language. It is a topic that must continue to surface in classrooms and in leadership teams on school campuses.

Conclusion

Crawford (1996) states that language is tied so closely to our sense of self: personality, ways of thinking, group identity, religious beliefs, and cultural rituals, formal and informal. Such human qualities are resistant to change at the point of a gun (p. 6). Escamilla (2000) shares that a low Spanish status in American schools and society has discouraged schools and teachers from developing the necessary knowledge base on how to best teach literacy in Spanish. In fact, the majority of teachers who are in charge of teaching children to read and write in Spanish have never received formal coursework in methods of teaching reading and writing in Spanish (p. 102). We must consider these facts as we continue to develop programs to support English Learners. Our country continues to encounter students who are lacking in their native language. When they

become adults, many of them continue to struggle in their communication in the native language, and when they try to pursue a career in which they need the native language they continue to be at a loss. It is also important to denote that in no form or way, Spanish development is more important than English. On the contrary, English development is crucial in the success of the students. However, the Spanish development is just as vital if we intend to prepare future bilingual educators. These are essential aspects to consider in our education system.

Chapter III

Methodology

McMahon & Watson (2013) suggest that storytelling is the way in which individuals make sense of their experiences (p. 279). As humans, we have the capability to tell our stories. Stories of contentment or success, stories of disappointment or frustrations, sorrow, or regret, and even stories of grief and melancholy. The truth is that we live our lives through stories. In the pursuit of a research study that resolves the question about the causes of native language attrition among university bilingual students, a qualitative narrative approach has been the choice for this study's methodology.

McMahon & Watson (2013) continue to state that storytelling can have real effects on individuals, and it can add to the shaping of their lives (p. 279). The stories of the bilingual education students told in this study serve as a form to provide insight into the struggles that these students might have faced in their schooling careers. Thus, providing others with a different perspective of what acquiring a bilingual teacher certification encompasses. The study presented intends to answer the question about the perceived causes of native language attrition on university-level students that are enrolled in a bilingual teacher preparation program. My work is focused on the term coined as *identity* (McAdams, 2011). McAdams (2011) considers identity as an internalized and evolving life story (p.117). McMahon & Watson (2013) explain that identity is reformulated through a progressing process of self-constructed stories (p. 280). Through the definition of the identity of the bilingual education students being studied, I, the researcher, intend to narrate their experiences through their own stories.

A qualitative narrative study deems most appropriate for this study because the stories of bilingual education students were utilized to study the causes for native language attrition. Creswell (2014) states that narrative research is a design of inquiry in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals through the stories about their lives (p. 13). In this study, I, the researcher, have acquired evidence of causes of native language attrition through interviews and a researcher reflective journal of five bilingual teacher candidates. Through the interviews, the researcher acquired narrations of the stories told by the bilingual education students. Creswell (2014) also suggests that through the narrative approach, the researcher re-stories the information gathered in order to combine the views from the participants' lives with the researcher's life in what is termed a collaborative narrative (p. 14). Shank & Brown (2007) state that when we can find patterns in place, then we know that things are related to each other in meaningful ways (p. 61). One of the most common ways to look for patterns in qualitative research is to look for themes (p. 61). The researcher has aimed to analyze the gathered findings and categorize the findings into emergent themes to determine what the findings provide. The researcher tells the stories of these teacher candidates to provide better support for their struggles as they become bilingual educators, while making connections to the researcher's own experiences going through a bilingual teacher preparation program through a reflective journal.

Methodological Framework: Narrative Inquiry

This research study is a narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Clandinin & Connelly (2000) share that narrative inquiry is a way of understanding and inquiring experience through collaboration between researcher and participants, over

time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus (p. 20).

Narrative inquiry is a form of research that takes place in the natural setting of the participants. It allows the researcher to tell the stories of the people's lived experiences through a narrative.

Clandinin & Connelly (2000) explain three commonplaces of narrative inquiry: temporality, sociality, and place, also known as dimensions (p.129). Clandinin et al. (2006) share that events under study are in temporal transition (p. 479). Temporality points the researcher towards what has happened in the past, what is happening in the present, and what might happen in the future of the people under study. Clandinin et al. (2006) state that sociality refers to the feelings, hopes, desires, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions (p.480). As a researcher, I found it important to share the feelings, hopes, and struggles of the students I have interviewed, and through this journey, find the answers to the question presented in this research. Furthermore, Clandinin et al. (2006) define place as the specific concrete, physical, and topological boundaries where the inquiry occurs (p. 480). It is important to take note of where the research happens because this, too, tells a story.

Clandinin et al. (2010) share that:

As narrative inquirers, our lived and told stories are always in relation to or with those of our participants. We do not stand outside the lives of participants but see ourselves as part of the phenomenon under study. As narrative inquirers, we study the lives of participants as we come alongside them, and become part of their lives and they part of ours (p. 82).

I, the researcher, decided to follow a narrative inquiry because I wanted to tell the stories of the struggle of being a Latinx growing up in the United States and trying to become a bilingual teacher. I personally grew up with Spanish as my first language, acquiring English as my second language. Learning English was hard work; however, maintaining the language that my parents taught me was also difficult. The environment in which I grew up did not provide me with sufficient opportunities to fully develop my first language in an academic setting. It was always about the importance of learning English. In all of my schooling years, I can only recall one teacher who I clearly remember saying *“cuiden el Español, es el idioma de sus padres”*, *“take care of your Spanish for it is your parents’ language”*. It was not until I arrived in Mexico at the age of ten where I was abruptly awakened to the fact that my academic Spanish was very minuscule.

Through the interviews I conducted with the students, I realized that as they grew up in the United States, they had no other choice but to put all of their efforts into learning English. They most certainly learned English, and they are now able to conduct themselves in English without a problem. It was until this moment, however, that they realized that their academic language in Spanish was lacking. They wanted to be bilingual certified teachers, but the truth was that they had not had enough opportunities to practice their native language in an academic setting. As Chan (2017) states, the stories told in this research became rich resources and prompted reflection (p.26). Clandinin and Connelly (1995) share that teachers know their lives in terms of stories. They live stories, tell stories of those lives, retell stories with changed possibilities, and relive the changed stories (p. 12). I wanted to tell the stories of these Latinx students with the hopes that my work would contribute to the literature and that we would find answers to the question of

why native language attrition was happening among our students. Through the stories told by the students, I was able to gather themes that provided some answers to the current situations, many bilingual education students are facing.

For the researcher, narrative inquiry was the framework that best allowed the researcher to retell the participant's stories. Narrative inquiry allows for participants to share their experiences and struggles through stories. The researcher's job is to transcribe those stories and analyze them as a whole. Narrative inquiry allows the researcher to tell the stories as they are directly from the participants' words.

Participants

To acquire answers to the questions stated above, a narrative inquiry was conducted to tell the participant's stories. This narrative inquiry was composed of three bilingual education students in the state of Texas. The three students who participated in the study were students who had already concluded their bilingual education courses in a local university in the city of Houston.

The participants for this study were selected on a voluntary basis based on their enrollment in the bilingual education certification program. The researcher recruited the participants through a presentation of the study and an invitation to serve as participants. The researcher was also part of this study. IRB approval was obtained prior to beginning the study.

Carolina Gonzalez (pseudonym), one of the participants, was born in the United States. She graduated from the local university with her bachelor's degree in bilingual education in 2012. She is currently pursuing her master's degree with expected graduation in 2020. She is 29 years old. She is currently teaching in a dual language

classroom. After three tries of the BTLPT exam she finally was able to be successful. In her narrative, she shares about her experiences as an undergraduate student trying to become a bilingual educator with a bit of her experience as a current teacher. She comes from a family with Peruvian ancestry.

Giovana Castillo (pseudonym), the second participant, was also born in the United States. She graduated from the local university with her bachelor's degree in December 2018. She is 34 years old. She has been teaching as a long-term substitute teacher for a year. She is currently in remedial courses because she has not been able to pass the BTLPT. She also cannot take a full-time teaching position because she has not earned the required certification. Giovana comes from a family with Mexican ancestry.

Estela Morales (pseudonym), the third participant, was born in the United States. She recently completed her courses to earn her bachelor's degree from a local university in May 2020. She is 25 years old. She has not acquired a teaching job yet, as she has not passed her certification exams yet. She has not attempted the BTLPT because she is worried she might not pass it because several of her classmates have not passed the exam. Estela comes from a family of Cuban ancestry.

Jacqueline Aguilar (researcher) also took part in this study. She was born in the United States. She has completed her bachelor's degree, master's degree, and is currently pursuing her doctoral degree from a local university. She is 29 years old. She has taught in the elementary setting for four years, she has served as an instructional literacy coach for three years, and as an adjunct professor at a local university for four years. She attempted and passed her BTLPT on the first try. Jacqueline comes from a family of Mexican ancestry.

Participants and Researcher				
Name	Age	Current Educational Status	Native Language	Times taken the BTLPT
Carolina Gonzalez (Participant)	29 years old	Completed bachelor's degree and currently pursuing master's degree. Teaching for six years.	Spanish	Took the BTLPT three times. Failed two times. Passed on the third attempt.
Giovana Castillo (Participant)	34 years old	Completed bachelor's degree but not yet certified. Attending remedial courses.	Spanish	Took the BTLPT once. Failed. Attending remedial courses to attempt again.
Estela Morales (Participant)	25 years old	Currently completing bachelor's degree. Not yet certified.	Spanish	Has not taken the BTLPT exam. Fears she might fail. Many of her classmates have failed the exam.
Jacqueline Aguilar (Researcher)	29 years old	Completed bachelor's and master's degree. Currently pursuing doctoral degree.	Spanish	Passed BTLPT on the first attempt.

Sampling Design

For this study, the researcher chose to follow a purposive sampling design (Shank and Brown, 2007). The purposive sampling design is also known as a judgment sampling design (Marshall, 1996). In the purposive sampling, the sample members are selected because of their particular characteristics or nature (Shank and Brown, 2007). In this case, the researcher chose the three participants based on their enrollment in the bilingual education certification program. The purpose of selecting these particular students was to identify themes across their narratives to acquire themes that reflected the reasoning behind native language attrition.

Marshall (1996) shares that in a judgment sampling design, the researcher selects the most productive sample to answer the research question (p. 523). In this research, I, the researcher, considered that selecting a small sample size with the focus solely on students who were enrolled in a bilingual education program would allow me to find specific answers through themes based on the participants' experiences through a narrative inquiry. Marshall (1996) also continues to say that this can involve developing a framework of the variables that might influence an individual's contribution and will be based on the researcher's practical knowledge of the research area, the available literature and evidence from the study itself (p. 523). In this research I considered that allowing these bilingual education students to share their experiences would contribute to the study.

Methods of Data Collection

The data collection for this study was acquired over the course of a month. The specific data revealed in this study was collected in the month of May 2020. I, the researcher, conducted a qualitative study in which several forms of data collection occurred including interviews and self-reflecting journal entries. I, the researcher, utilized the triangulation method to represent significant data (Mills, 2014). The data for this study was acquired through interviews and a self-reflecting journal kept by the researcher.

Journaling

I, the researcher, collected data through journal entries as the data collection progressed. In this journal, I collected data that I acquired in conversations that happened between the participants and me, and other experiences of the researcher that were related

to the topic of research. Journaling was utilized as a tool that allowed me as the researcher to jot down my inward responses to the outward experiences during the research (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

Interviews

In order to acquire a full narrative for this narrative inquiry research, I conducted three interviews. The first round of interviews was completed individually with each participant through Zoom calls that lasted between 15-20 minutes each to look at themes across the narratives. The researcher prepared a set of questions that can be found in the appendix. The second round of interviews were also conducted with each participant individually lasting between 15-20 minutes in length, with follow up questions to the previous interview. The interview questions for the second round of interviews can be found in the appendix. The third interview was conducted as a focus group as a debrief meeting, which lasted about 30 minutes in length. All interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format, meaning that the questions asked did not follow a specific format but rather allowed for flexibility based on the conversations. The researcher had a set of questions to guide the conversations and occasionally asked additional questions based on the conversations. The interviews were conducted through the Zoom online platform with open-ended questions to elicit the views and opinions of the participants as Creswell (2014) suggests. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed in order to catch the entire narratives. The questions asked in the interviews were focused on each participants' K-12 schooling journey, as well as their experiences in their undergraduate degree course work. This allowed the researcher the opportunity to fully retell the experiences of the participants in this study. These interviews also provided historical

information about the participants' past experiences as native language users of the Spanish language, contributing to the study being conducted (Creswell, 2014). Creswell (2014) suggests that interviews allow the researcher to control the line of questioning (p. 191). As the researcher, I found that the interviews were a vital source of data collection because it allowed me to gear the conversations towards the topic that was being studied.

Instruments and Measurements

Reflections through Journaling

As a researcher, I found that jotting down my thoughts and experiences as they came to mind was a part of my research that significantly contributed to my findings. Seven journal entries were completed, one after each interview conducted. The idea behind the journal entries was to recall my past experiences that connected with the experiences of the participants. The journal entries were included in the appendix of this study. These journal entries served as artifacts to correlate with the conversations held with my participants. Although the participants did not keep a journal themselves, they were aware that our conversations correlated with my own experiences, and I tried to find those connections through journal entries.

Vital Conversations

For this narrative inquiry, conversations held a vital role in this research study. The conversations were led by open-ended questions that the researcher asked. This allowed for the participants' stories to emerge as they told of their experiences as bilingual teacher candidates. The stories told by the participants were full of struggles, successes, and experiences. Through conversations, I, the researcher, was able to gather the information that informed the study. These conversations were audiotaped and later transcribed into the

study. The participants that shared their stories with me through conversations were students who truly showed their struggles as bilingual education students. They underwent many experiences similar to the ones I encountered as well when I was in their shoes. The conversations held in our meetings pushed us to share experiences of our past and struggles of our present, which in turn provided great insight to the study presented.

Data Analysis

Journaling

Journaling became a highly significant form of data collection for this study. The researcher collected seven journal entries. The researcher completed a journal entry after completing every interview. Once the reflective journal entries were gathered, the researcher coded each of the journal entries for significance. The journal entries were compared side by side with the data collected from the semi-structured interviews. The journal entries were coded for emergent themes. The journal entry collections were laid out in the findings following a sequence of the researcher's experiences. This was done to allow the researcher to analyze the entries through the lens of continuity (past, present, and future) and inward, outward, backward, and forward (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). This allowed the researcher to connect her own lived experiences with the participants' experiences.

Interviews

Clandinin & Connelly share that narrative inquiry is an interpersonal research methodology that explores storied experience by attending inward, outward, backward, forward, and to place or places (as cited in Seiki, Caine & Huber, 2018, p. 12). Through the interviews posed by the researcher, the participants were able to share their own

stories through storytelling. The stories shared by the participants were recorded and then transcribed into a word document. The researcher then included the conversations in the study to share the experiences of the participants. The conversations were explored inward (looking at their personal experiences), outward (looking at their experiences through the lens of the people that surrounded them), backward (looking at their past experiences), forward (looking at the future experiences), and in places (looking at the environment) as Clandinin and Connelly share. The researcher analyzed how these experiences produced inward, outward, backward, forward, and places effects in the lives of the participants. The conversations were coded based on emergent themes. The stories collected from the semi-structured interviews were laid out in the findings following a sequence of each of the participant's lived experiences. This was done to allow the researcher to analyze the stories through the lens of continuity (past, present, and future) and inward, outward, backward, and forward.

Practical Limitations

The current study was conducted during unprecedented times as the world went through a global pandemic (COVID-19). The local university where this study was being conducted was shut down to prevent the spread of the virus before interviews were conducted. The interviews conducted for this study were done through the Zoom online platform instead of face-to-face interviews, as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest. The study also focused on three bilingual education students who were at different stages in their careers. Acquiring interviews with more students might allow for more findings. The research was limited to the narratives provided by the students. The stories that the students were willing to share dictated the amount of data that was collected and the

insights that the researcher found. The study was also carried out in a short amount of time over the course of a month, which also may have limited the quantity of data that was collected.

Ethical Considerations

This study required the researcher to provide a pseudonym for the students in order to guard their identity. It was also important for the researcher to keepsake all of the information gathered from the participants in a drive that was locked up in a locked cabinet. All of the data shared by the participants was confidential, and no names were shared with the public. The researcher also respected the participants' desire to share any information during the interviews and throughout the course of the study.

Conclusion

It is important to consider that a narrative approach has allowed the researcher to re-story the experiences that participants have lived. Through journaling, the researcher has also been able to make connections between the researcher's lived experiences with those of the participants. Through this methodological approach, the researcher aims to acquire answers to the question presented in this investigation.

Chapter IV

Findings

Introduction

As I began to "cuadrar" (formulate) my dissertation, I found myself a bit worried when I could not think of the exact word in English. I tend to think through my choice of words in English, but every now and then, I think up the perfect sentence in Spanish but cannot think of the direct translation in English. As I type up my findings, I find myself scrolling back and forth between a language translator when I cannot think of the appropriate or equal word in English. It has taken me back to my journey and that of my participants with language. In this research study, three unique participants have joined me to tell the stories of the challenges that bilingual education students face as they strive to acquire their bilingual teacher certification. In this study, the researcher has joined the participants in the telling of four stories that resonate with each other. The experiences of the participants and that of the researcher have been interwoven to tell of these experiences. We each experienced different, yet so similar situations that connect us each in this world of bilingual educators.

The inquiry began when I started teaching a Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test prep course at a local university. The beginning experiences I had were worrisome. How could I prepare my students to succeed on the BTLPT in just one semester when these students had stopped utilizing their native language years ago? Some of them were ready even without the course because they had migrated from Spanish speaking countries. However, a vast majority were students who had been born and raised in the United States and lacked practice in their native language. Eventually,

the factors that caused native language attrition in bilingual education students led me back to finding two students who had struggled to pass their BTLPT and one student who was in the midst of preparing to take it. The stories begin like this:

A Story of Becoming

Carolina Gonzalez (pseudonym) recalls growing up in a Peruvian home where Spanish was her native language. She begins this way:

OK so I am a second-generation immigrant, my mom and my dad are both from Peru and they met here at one of the Peruvian gatherings and festivals and so I was born as the first generation first of my entire family to be born here in the United States. My mom I believe they both moved here around the 1980s I remember my mom it was like there had been some kind of drug war in Peru and it attacked one of the parks that she lived nearby and pretty much just everything went downhill and she just wanted to take a risk and come to America and luckily at that time I forgot what person was there but it was really easy to just get her citizenship so she just got lucky and both my mom and my dad got their citizenship. Both my parents speak well English, my mom when she came to America she started taking classes at a local community college to learn English. So, since the 1980s my mom has been going to school and she just graduated two years ago so after 20 something years of her going to college, she has over 500 credits because she couldn't decide on a degree. And then my dad is a nurse, so he ended up getting his degree years ago but umm went back to Peru in 2001 so both speak English.

Researcher: Do you think your parents ever thought that learning English was more important than learning Spanish?

Yes, so I know that my mom she always said that she just umm she wanted this life here in America to be as easy as possible for me growing up here. So, she was all for me learning English. I mean the Spanish part it didn't really bother her if I spoke Spanish or not because I mentioned before in the last meeting that I would talk to her in English. But my family was the one that was actually very upset that umm her not pushing the Spanish on me. But obviously they didn't live here, and they didn't know what it's like you know the circumstances and everything of living here so she was pro pushing English but now I think after so many number of years she sees the value in knowing both languages. (Interview, May 27, 2020).

Carolina recalls growing up in a Hispanic household where her parents spoke to her in Spanish. However, Carolina mentions that all of her responses were always in English. Her parents did not seem to mind. Her mother's actions showed her that it was fine to speak English. Her mother as many other parents wanted her life in America to be as easy as possible. However, the rest of her family in Peru was upset with her mother for not "pushing" the Spanish upon her. She continues to recall experiences growing up,

Researcher: How much Spanish did you speak at home growing up?

Carolina: Umm well as a child that [Spanish] was my first language and then I believe that once I got into kindergarten that's when I started speaking more English at home but honestly I barely spoke that much Spanish from what I can remember only when my family from Peru would come to Houston but I remember a lot of my responses back to my mom were mainly in English growing up. (Interview, May 23, 2020).

Researcher: Do both of your parents speak English as well?

Yes, yes they're both Peruvian and obviously they only talk to me in Spanish umm but my responses to them were in English. (Interview, May 23, 2020).

Researcher: Did you read Spanish growing up?

Umm whenever I would go to Peru over the summer I would have books there in Spanish but at home there would be mainly books in English. Now I read a lot more in Spanish just because I teach in Spanish, so I have to do whatever it takes so that "que se me suelte la lengua" haha (let my tongue loose).

Researcher: Did you listen to Spanish music or watch Spanish TV growing up?

Yes, I listened to Shakira, Selena, umm and I remember watching all "las telenovelas" (Spanish Soap Operas) and umm I can't remember the names that's what I grew up with was Spanish television. (Interview, May 23, 2020).

Researcher: Did you converse at a high academic level in Spanish ever growing up?

Carolina: I don't think I have and right now I'm trying to read academic books in Spanish I mean I guess my first introduction to academic level Spanish was with Dr. Guerra at the local university so that was my first experience with that and then now with that being my career and me having to teach Spanish right now in a dual language classroom I mean I'm studying a lot so that I can teach those kids well. (Interview, May 23, 2020).

Carolina was a native Spanish speaker growing up. Her environment was surrounded by the Spanish language. She recalls growing up listening to Spanish music, watching Spanish television, and she seldomly read books in Spanish as a child. However, Carolina mentions that she does not really recall a time when she ever spoke

the academic Spanish language until she entered the bilingual teacher certification program. Carolina's experience is one that is very common in many households in the United States. Hispanics usually practice conversational Spanish at home growing up and once they enter the U.S. schooling system the Spanish language use begins to diminish. Carolina continues to share,

Researcher: When would you say you stopped developing your Spanish?

Carolina: From the last time that I remember I know that it truly stopped developing probably middle school, high school that's when I was completely like umm I didn't really speak Spanish I had no umm Hispanic friends in middle and high school mainly so I think that's where it really just went downhill. (Interview, May 23, 2020).

Carolina: So, I feel like I just stopped using my Spanish like I didn't use it as much I think it was middle school/ high school time and I think it was because of the people I hung around with or I just saw the language as an embarrassment. I hit a point in my life I remember cause it was Mr. Salazar my Spanish teacher he hated me and me and I realize it now he highly disliked me because he knew I was Latin, I mean my name was "Carolina Gonzalez" like you know it doesn't get more foreign well you know and I know that he disliked me because he knew that I spoke Spanish but I would fake it, that I didn't know how to speak Spanish and I guess I did it because I wanted to like be cool or like I don't know I hung out with a lot of white people at that time so I was possibly like embarrassed like speaking another language and all that so I know that's the time that I truly I didn't use it at all I didn't have any Hispanic friends like at all so I didn't ever use the language I

think it was because my friends influenced it. Obviously that's the time for a child for like hormones and you're just trying to fit in, so I allowed I followed the crowd. Peer pressure 100%. Like I think of myself now like an embarrassing thing to have ever thought that way but it's just like I'm trying to do my best to make up for that loss of time and value the language and my culture and have pride in being Latin. (Interview, May 29, 2020)

Carolina indicates that her Spanish goes "downhill" at a certain point in her life. The story that she shares indicates that her environment influenced her to avoid speaking the Spanish language. She recalls faking that she did not speak Spanish in order to avoid having to do it. The people that surrounded her were from a different race and all she wanted to do was fit in with the rest of her peers. Carolina shares,

Researcher: Have you taken the BTLPT?

Carolina: Yes, I have taken it [the BTLPT] three times. Correct [Passed it the third time].

I think [made her unsuccessful the first two times] I was unsuccessful because I remember talking to Monica and Lorena [classmates] and all the girls and the girls were like oh it's not that hard, you'll be fine, your Spanish isn't that bad, you'll be ok. Of course, all my friends that were in the class with us they all either were in bilingual education and their Spanish was way better than mine, but I didn't I didn't know you know I didn't know that. So I just went in the first time and I just took it just to see what it was and I did horrible and then the second time I studied but for the third time I studied with a friend from high school that also had failed it twice and was taking it the third time and she's like lets study

together lets help each other so that's where me and her we uh listened to transcripts or she would read the transcripts and I would be listening and then she'd ask me the questions so it's like we mimicked the test but we were helping each other out. We did the listening, speaking, reading, and writing part and we would judge each other. Like she would tell me you need to improve on this next time do this and we'd time each other and I feel like that after that we both passed so I feel like that's the key to this success of this test especially for us that uh if we grew up here and our Spanish isn't as dominant as you know people that come from Latin countries. (Interview, May 23, 2020).

Carolina indicates taking her BTLPT exam and passing it on the third time. She shares her reasoning behind being unsuccessful the first two times. She recalls being worried, but her friends/classmates who were also in the program told her that her Spanish was not that bad. However, Carolina realizes that her classmates unlike her had been a part of a bilingual program in their early schooling years. They had practiced the language more than she had. Carolina then realizes that although she knew Spanish, she was not up to par to her classmates in terms of the academic language that the BTLPT requires. Carolina continues to share about her realization of her Spanish not being up to par to her classmates,

Carolina: [Entering the bilingual program and not realizing that her Spanish language was not up to par with her classmates' the coming to this realization and how it happened] Yeah so pretty much I didn't know bilingual education existed. So, umm that just kind of gives you a clue of like my childhood. So, I started off at a local community college and my first year I was in regular I was just going to

do regular ed teaching, but the advisor told me you should do the bilingual education you speak Spanish. I was like well OK I didn't know, and she told me that bilingual education pays more it's better for you ok whatever I'll do it. Then I transferred to the local university and when I got to the university and I took my first class with Dr. Guerra and I saw all these Latin women that I've never been I had never been exposed like that. I've been to like Spanish mass or like my catholic classes with all the Hispanics you know but this was my first time being like in an education course with all of these women. So, I remember my first time it was very intimidating because everybody is like presenting themselves in Spanish and I'm here like I have never presented myself ever in Spanish, so it was a big revelation and how uh I don't know I guess how pathetic my Spanish was. I felt like, this is sad that my Spanish is like that. (Interview, May 23, 2020).

Carolina decides to enter the bilingual program upon a suggestion from her advisor in community college. Carolina shares that she had never even heard of the existence of the bilingual program. Her community college advisor tells her that she should pursue the bilingual education program because she knew Spanish. Carolina accepts to begin her journey towards earning a bilingual certification. However, at the moment, she was not aware of what that implied. Her first day in one of the bilingual courses when she transferred to the university, she realizes that she is intimidated by her peers. The feeling of intimidation is one that is quite common among bilingual education students. Carolina feels intimidated because she has never had to use the Spanish language in an academic setting. She has never attended a formal class in Spanish. She

realizes at that moment that her peers are presenting themselves in Spanish, which is something she has never had to do. She recalls,

Carolina: ... and then I went to Peru and when I came back from Peru I went there for a month and that kind of like changed my whole outlook seeing my family and my culture at a you know when you're I guess an adult seeing your culture and your family it's just different. I don't know if this is making sense and then slowly all of Dr. Guerra's class was all in Spanish so that's how I knew I had to just push myself I mean I remember talking to Monica, Monica and Lorena they would just say "let it flow" the Spanish and I was like I can understand you 100% but I cannot flow I can't speak such fluent Spanish like you do. I mean now I just study. I mean today I just study study because uh you know I can't I can't be what I once was at the beginning of my whole college career, but it's been a journey. I will never forget that first day, Dr. Guerra had us standing up in class and presenting and I was like what is this? I wanted to die. But it's very good because now I have this immense pride for being Latin and Hispanic. And I shut down any child that dares put down the Latin culture or any culture I am 100% against that because it truly affects you and I'm like the living proof of what that does to you. (Interview, May 23, 2020).

Carolina shares her experience of coming of age and how her perspective of her culture shifts after she has been exposed to the language in different environments. She is immersed in the language in her college courses and while she is around more Latinx friends/classmates. She is also immersed in the language when she visits Peru for a

month and begins to see her language and culture through an adult's perspective. She continues to share,

Carolina: [Experiences of how she had to push herself in her bilingual courses at the university] Well I had to reread over and over and over again to try to understand because I already zone out I mean who doesn't zone out in those annoying, boring textbooks. So that was already a struggle but then reading in Spanish was like on another level especially because in middle school/ high school I like denied my culture I denied my Spanish language. So I had to study a lot the good thing is that at that time I could, my English, I mean I would never say that my English was perfect or great I think my English I don't know, I don't think I'm good in English I don't think I'm good in Spanish I just do the best that I can but you know I use things or words in English to Spanish to help me understand like "automatic" to "automatico" so I was able to like let that transition flow but I had to reread a lot and study a lot. I remember this one class with Dr. Guerra, I mean I think I got like a C. I barely passed that class because it was a textbook in Spanish, and it was like the hardest thing I've ever had to do. Referring back to what the other ladies were saying, it just kind of clicked in my head like Giovana, when I was younger I also did speak the Spanish language but I also feel like because I was in ESL classes and there was no bilingual program when I grew up, I was only in an ESL program and I feel like the ESL programs were just like frowned upon or they weren't looked at as just like being in a regular class or a GT class and I think that's where it all stimulated from. Like the

way teachers or the others perceived the ESL class is what made me embarrassed about the language... (Interview, May 29, 2020).

Carolina shares her experience in her bilingual courses at the university. She shares how she had to constantly reread to try and understand her textbooks. She shares how she used her second language to grasp the significance of her first language at the college level. She shares how she felt she was frowned upon growing up being in an ESL classroom and how that impacted the way she felt about her native language. She continues to share,

Carolina: [Usage of Spanish] Obviously in the classroom, because I know that these English students they need to learn the second language of Spanish and umm since I've gotten married my husband is Brazilian and all his friends are Latin so through them and meeting all the Latins I mean I feel like I have to speak Spanish it's just embarrassing I mean I speak Spanglish but once I get comfortable the Spanish flows but I just see myself I guess in this era of my life I'm speaking the most Spanish I have ever spoken in my entire life from what I can recall. (Interview, May 27, 2020)

Carolina shares about the usage of her Spanish language in her everyday life. Now that Carolina is a teacher she shares that she continues to practice her Spanish language in the classroom. She also shares that now that she is married, her husband's friends are mainly Latinx and therefore she often has to speak Spanish although she still continues to feel embarrassed to do so because she struggles but she tries once she begins feeling comfortable. She also shares,

Carolina: [Becoming and adult and understanding the reasoning behind language usage.] So I just want to add to what you all are saying so I feel like we've all been in similar situations but as we grow older I'm guessing we are all realizing like how amazing we are because we speak a second language whether it's butchered or not and that our culture is like amazing and it makes us who we are. But I really believe that we grew up in like America the way that they perceive foreigners, or I guess if your skin is not white and you don't have colored eyes or blonde hair like you're labeled as a foreigner. So, I feel like that's what we grew up with and so it's like we're like I have dark hair and darker skin I'm Latin it's embarrassing it's not as great as white but in reality it's like everything that we are is amazing but I feel like history or the way that history plays itself or what we learn in school it's all about oh the whites came to America the whites took over it they killed the Native Americans like white this white that and you grow up and it shows it's all white white white and so I feel like that's where our like as a Hispanic I was embarrassed to be Hispanic. So, I feel like that all derived from it all being white all around me when white people have also come from different parts of the world and they're all foreigners too even though they might just be third, fourth, fifth generation. You know like they're foreigners as well and you know I just feel like there's like this stigmatism if you're Latin we have to just fit in we have to learn English when in reality we need to just our culture and everything is just it's awesome that's what makes us who we are and we've let it oppress us which has now led us to be adults and like we struggle with the Spanish. I mean I don't know; I specifically struggle with the Spanish and it

pisses me off! I mean I think Giovana mentioned how she wished that she spoke Spanish as her dominant language and literally that is what I wish every day and it bothers me. I feel like it just angers me that I did not have that and it's because my mom also didn't my mom should've... not that my mom didn't raise me well or anything like that but like the pride in your culture and the pride that you have in being Hispanic it needs to be transferred into your children and transferred at a young age because everything around you is going to be like this this no don't do this... but if you have that pride in you. My mom was afraid she's a foreigner you know she didn't like she was afraid literally my mom still doesn't go out anywhere because she's in a foreign country, so I just feel like that was just kind of transferred unto us. I don't know I just feel like there's just that... that's what lead us to not be or not embrace the Latinness in us early on or something like that and now it's like we need it in our careers. You know like in our jobs. (Interview, May 29, 2020).

Carolina expresses her feelings about growing up in the United States and repressing her culture and language. She shares about her regrets having repressed who she was and not embracing the fact that she is Latinx and speaks Spanish. She reflects on the origins of the feelings of repression and connects it to her early education in K-12 schooling. She shares,

Carolina: [Language connection to Culture] I believe that language is connected to your culture and that's what brings you closer to your family and who you can identify yourself with. If you lose the sense of culture of language which I feel like I had in high school/ early college it kind of leaves you at a standstill of who

am I? Like what do I stand for where do I come from and you're filled with conflictedness. So, I believe language and culture have a lot to do with one another. (Interview, May 27, 2020)

Carolina states that she believes that language is highly connected to culture. She shares that this is what brings you closer to your family and your identity. She refers back to her experience in losing a sense of her culture and her language and how this left her without an identity. She continues to share,

Carolina: [Wanting to blend in with the rest.] In high school you know it's all about like cliques and what group you hang out with who are your friends, you start with boyfriends and girlfriends I just didn't want to stand out in that aspect, so I just hung out with all the white people. Besides all the white people thing, great life or whatever, but I feel like I really just repressed my Spanish culture. Everything that defines me the way that I was raised during that time. That's why I just always hid away from it. Now that I've learned so much about being bilingual and that I'm not the only one that feels this way it kind of inspires me and lets me know I'm not alone. Because it is intimidating to be in classes with fluent Spanish speakers but it's just we all grew up differently, we all have different experiences that led us to where we are today.

Carolina shares that she wanted to fit in with her environment. She also shares that she repressed her Spanish culture and her identity. She shares that now that she is an adult and has met others that are in the same situation it inspires her to continue. She shares that it is intimidating to be in a class with fluent Spanish speakers but

acknowledges that each person has gone through different experiences. She continues to share,

Carolina: [Reasoning behind her English (second language) being stronger than Spanish (her first language)]. I know on my part I remember my mom put me in head start, and head start was only provided in English and I actually learned in my college courses, we took an undergrad course about the history in bilingual education and ESL education so that's where I learned like the history of Bilingual and ESL education makes sense to why what happened to me. You know my first educational experience was in all English and then I also took the Bilingual and ESL class in my masters and seeing it from an undergrad and then seeing it from a masters perspective I mean my mind just blew up the history of Bilingual and ESL education is what tells us and describes to us why we're here struggling. Like I know I am struggling. The struggle is real, and I know it's because of the history. It all began with head start and I remember I had this... I literally to this day I can remember that anger like I hated head start and I can't really remember why but I remember I think it was a teacher and I think the teacher just highly just disliked me I don't know if it's because I spoke Spanish or I don't know what it was... but I literally remember my last day of Head Start, and I don't even know why I still remember this but I remember my last day of Head Start I was sitting at a table away from her, she wanted all of us to go to circle time and I refused. I was like "I'm not going, I'm going to kindergarten! I'm not going to be here anymore!" So, I hated that woman. How do you know this as a four-year-old? I think it was because of that, like my experience as a

Spanish speaker and how it's frowned upon but it's like it's not frowned upon you're frowned upon for being monolingual! It's awesome to be bilingual or trilingual you're frowned upon monolingual so anyways I think that's where it all transitioned in the school and also in the ESL program I learned that the reasons why some schools have dual language programs two way, one way, bilingual programs, early exit, late exit it never made sense to me. Like when I first learned about that in our undergrad process I thought why didn't I get bilingual programs? Was it because the area that I lived in was racist? But no, it wasn't because of the racism it was because of what the community needed and at that time there was not enough Hispanic people in the community that I grew up in to have a bilingual program so that's why I only had an ESL program. So, I remember being in ESL with like Sasha, I still remember Sasha from Norway I remember we were all foreigners in this class I remember. It was just like the history, like this is why. I mean I should not blame it on my education, but it was because they couldn't provide the program for us. It's already such a struggle find bilingual teachers but it's where I grew up. They didn't have it so then they placed me in ESL which you know the only time that I ever got Spanish was at home. I think that's where it all begins. (Interview, May 29, 2020).

Carolina shares her reasoning behind her second language, becoming stronger than her native language. She shares that it all began in the K-12 schooling system. She talks about how she felt being in her Head Start program and how she felt that it was frowned upon to be a Spanish speaker. She continues to share her experience becoming a teacher,

Carolina: Teaching in Spanish right now can be a little scary and there are some mistakes in my grammar as I teach. But my Spanish like I do a lot of pre-studying prior to the lesson delivery there's like already set lesson plans so I read them in Spanish prior, and I make it flow once I present the lesson. It was scarier at the beginning of the year and as the year transitioned it just got easier and easier. I felt like my tongue my fluency just got smoother because I am getting more comfortable, I was practicing the language, so it got easier. I know that for sure when it comes to writing in Spanish, there's where I have a lack of confidence. I'm very unconfident in my Spanish so I have my Latin friends I'll text them I'll send them an email and tell them I need you to look at this please reply back. The dual language specialist I told her when I entered the role that the writing part is what was going to scare me the most and what I feel the most uncomfortable with so I also let her know like, "hey can you review this for me before I present it?". Right now, during this quarantine time I feel like I regressed in my Spanish since you know I'm just working by myself alone I'm only doing two videos a week in Spanish and I only meet with the kids twice a week in Spanish. So, I feel like I'm back tracking. (Interview, May 29, 2020)

Carolina's statements indicate that the more she began to practice her Spanish in the teaching environment the more she began to feel comfortable. She shares that because she has been practicing much more in her current role that it has become easier for her. She also shares her lack of confidence in her Spanish writing and that she has had to seek support from her colleagues whenever she has to write something in Spanish. She also shares that the less she practices the more she regresses in her growth of the Spanish

language. She reveals that during this quarantine, she has not been using the Spanish language much and that she felt she has regressed due to the lack of use. Carolina continues to share what she would have liked to see in her undergraduate bilingual education courses,

Carolina: [Recommendation to the college of education as an undergraduate student to help you be more successful with the BLPT]To have maybe a course that's dedicated to listening, speaking, reading, writing only in Spanish that provides you with strategies and practice of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. I think that a semester of that would be really helpful but then also I think having listening, speaking, reading, and writing throughout all of the bilingual courses would be extremely beneficial to all students. I know it would have helped me a lot. (Interview, May 23, 2020)

Carolina recommends that a course be embedded into the bilingual undergraduate courses curriculum where the four domains of language are practiced (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Carolina expresses that she believes she would have benefitted from a semester of that practice and even opportunities for practice throughout the entire semester. She continues to share,

Carolina: [Specifics on what she would have benefitted from at the university's bilingual program] I would say speaking activities about educational information, speaking activities about a lesson or maybe just even speaking activities about frogs, dogs, I don't know maybe just something very simple kind of like the ranges of the ELPS you know you have the beginner, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high. So, it's just basically like basic speaker activities and then you

transition into advanced high speaker activities which would be at an academic level of Spanish. Just beginner speaker, so that the people who speak at different levels can just begin to feel comfortable in however you would teach that. That would be the speaking part, maybe like listening having conversations, like let's say I'm a beginner Spanish speaker and I'm talking with you and you're an advanced high Spanish speaker so I'm just listening to you and then I have to write down what you're talking about or what I understood, the gist of what it is the story that you're telling me about. Reading would be, I would start off with basic reading levels, just to get that going and then slowly transition to more like article like reading and same thing with the writing just very basic like sentence stems and then transition to more advanced writing, because writing is the scariest part. Even when you're learning English I'm still scared of that, so the Spanish is just very scary. (Interview, May 29, 2020).

Carolina shares that she would have benefited from more Spanish language practice in her bilingual education courses. She shares the importance of considering that all students are at different levels and that more interaction might help students who need more support. She mentions a comparison to the ELPS (English Language Proficiency Standards) and how these standards are utilized to measure the English acquisition in K-12. She mentions that if something similar was set in place for the Spanish language, then that might have supported her development of the Spanish language. Carolina continues to express her decision in becoming a bilingual educator,

Carolina: It was the initiation of the advisor that said you can get paid more and you should take advantage of it and there's many more opportunities for you as a

bilingual educator if you have the Spanish do it and that's what started it and then I guess when I entered Dr. Guerra's classroom and being in a room full of Hispanics it was the first time ever in my life that I felt welcomed and that I felt part of something. I've always felt that I couldn't fit in I had to this or I had to do things this way and finally it's like I felt like I was at home with all of the Hispanics and it literally just changed my world upside down and that's what's led me to why today I'm with a masters in multicultural education and now I just want to continue to pursue this and bring pride I forgot the word in English to the Latin culture and all cultures I feel like all cultures need to be uplifted. (Interview, May 23, 2020).

Carolina shares her experience in becoming a bilingual educator. She expresses her feeling of belonging to a community. Carolina states how her experience of entering Dr. Guerra's classroom made her realize that there was a world where she belonged. Where she did not have to try really hard to pretend to be someone she was not. She felt at home. This experience has now led her to pursue a master's degree in multicultural education. Finally, Carolina shares, Carolina: [Past, present, and future in terms of language experiences.] So, I once was anti- Hispanic like really bad and I can tell you stories on and on I was anti-Hispanic because I had very low self-esteem. I think Estela mentioned self-esteem, I had extremely low self-esteem. Where I am at now I have built myself up and it truly happened when I entered college because I was away from those friends and I got to meet amazing people that are cultured and introduced me into this world of owning your culture and loving your culture and that you who you are and where your family comes from is what makes you so amazing. So, I'm all about learning the Spanish well and properly so that I can

execute well for my students but I'm also all about right now having pride and having pride in being Jewish, having pride in being Polish and being Latin and being African American and being you. So, I feel that's kind of like... cause that lack of self-esteem comes from people frowning upon you and just from my experience really just being frowned upon my whole entire youth which is not right and it's not correct and it's cost so many more issues in this country and in this world. I'm all about right now owning who you are, loving who you are and you're like the coolest person in the entire world because of your culture. If you speak another language or five or six like you're awesome you know? If you're monolingual you need to go stop being monolingual but that's where I'm at now. In the future I hope to definitely be able to speak academic Spanish and that Spanish I don't have kids now but I definitely want like my mom always spoke Spanish at home she never spoke English to me so I definitely want Spanish to be the dominant language at my house although my husband is Brazilian but he understands Spanish and everything so I just want to be the dominant mom "at home we speak only Spanish you're going to be in dual language or bilingual programs this is the coolest thing in the entire world". I want them to see how awesome it is to know two languages and maybe even Portuguese as well. That's where I see life and then making sure that all teachers brag and make sure to provide children with this amazing and uplifting who they are and where they come from. That's kind of like the future because language is awesome. (Interview, May 29, 2020).

Carolina ends the conversation sharing her thoughts on her past, present, and future. She recognizes that in the past she denied a lot of who she was and her roots, including her native language. She also shares that in the present she has gone through a rough journey that has led her to understand the value in her native language and culture which is something that she is now proud of. For her future, Carolina shares that she would like to teach her own future children her

native language along with English and other languages. Her perspective on language and culture has changed throughout the years, which has led her to where she is now.

My Spanish is Not Good Enough

Giovana Castillo (Pseudonym) recalls learning Spanish as her native language growing up. She stopped practicing it because her family wanted her to learn English to be successful. Her story begins this way:

So, my parents were immigrants. They came to the U.S. I would say like this was maybe like I was born in 1986 so my mom was here around the 1960s that's when she came. When she came with her husband at the that time he came over here to work well he was here first and then she came down and then she started working I guess back then it was easier to get your citizenship. So, she took some classes and she was able to become U.S. citizenship. So, this was like maybe 10 years after she arrived in the U.S. that's when she applied for citizenship. They knew that Spanish was important but I guess arriving here to the U.S. because I'm the baby of the family so my older sisters and brothers they were already in high school when I was born so whenever I started like pre-k they told my mom no she needs to learn English because you know she's going to have trouble and so that's where everything changed so then I started learning English, my sister in law started teaching me, and then ever since then it's always been English. (Interview, May 25,2020)

Giovana shares that her parents were immigrants to the United States. She was born here in the United States. She recalls that her parents believed Spanish was important, but her siblings believed that she should learn English because they did not

want Giovana to have trouble when she began school. She continues to share her experiences with language,

Researcher: How much Spanish did you speak at home as a child?

Giovana: Umm as a child in the beginning let's say like around four or five years old that was my first language so only Spanish. I was talking around that age. It wasn't until Kinder when they moved me to an English class because my sister in law she taught me English so cause I knew nothing but Spanish and she was umm white and she was like "oh no she's like I'm going to teach you English" so then I learned English before kinder and they put me in an English class and ever since then it's just like been like English English. (Interview, May 21, 2020).

Giovana shares her experience with her native language. She began as a Spanish native speaker, her mother's tongue. She then expresses that her sister in law was against her just knowing Spanish. Her sister in law was from a different race, which is an indication that perhaps she did not know or understand the value of the native language. Giovana was placed in an English class when she began kindergarten, and moving forward, all of her schooling years were in English. This is an indication that Giovana never had the opportunity to experience the Spanish language in an academic setting. Giovana continues to share,

Researcher: Did you read Spanish growing up?

Giovana: I would read like like I guess easy sentences, umm as I got older I guess it kind of like stuck with me, so I remember like one day you know those magnets some stores sell you these magnets with writing on it. One day I was playing with my brother cause my older brother that was married to the white girl,

he doesn't know how to read it in Spanish and so I told my brother "I bet you I could read more Spanish than you" and he's like no you can't so whenever I read the whole thing that was on there I can't remember what it was but he was like oh my God, I was surprised at myself too I was like wow I can read Spanish but I guess because I learned it in pre-k it just stuck with me and I was able to read Spanish. (Interview, May 21, 2020).

Giovana recalls a time when she proved her brother that she could read in Spanish as opposed to him. She remembers being surprised herself of being able to read the sentence in Spanish. Giovana had not practiced her Spanish reading since she was in Pre-K. She was not aware that she was still able to decipher what the sentence said. This is an indication of the importance of providing opportunities for children to develop their native language, an opportunity that Giovana did not receive.

Researcher: When do you think you stopped developing your Spanish?

Giovana: I believe once I got to like maybe third grade around there is when I would hardly speak Spanish, so mainly it was just English umm when I talked to my siblings it was in English. My mom I would talk to her in Spanish but it wasn't like you know it was just it wasn't like I didn't really have like conversations with her like it was just like and if I did I would say little words in Spanish and then I would talk a lot in English so it was just like Spanglish with her and she knew nothing but Spanish and so then I would even tell her like mom you need to I don't know if you remember but when they used to have oh what was that program called Ingles Sin Barreras I was like mom you need that because you need to learn English. But umm yeah it was just around third grade when I

just started slowly like losing the Spanish language. And it wasn't until I got to like high school when I started talking more cause I guess cause of my friends and I was like really into like Spanish music like you know like nortech and all of that so it was just I guess when I started speaking it more. (Interview, May 21, 2020).

Giovana tells of her experience of when she stopped developing the Spanish language. She states that in third grade, she hardly used the Spanish language, not even with her mother. Her mother only spoke Spanish, and Giovana expresses that she told her mother that she needed to learn English. She also states that at a certain point when she did use the Spanish language, it was no longer Spanish but a mixture of both English and Spanish "Spanglish". This is quite common for many Hispanics that learn English. Her story continues,

Researcher: Did you ever feel ashamed to speak in Spanish?

Giovana: I did because I would not sound out words not because I'm ashamed of you know living in America and speaking Spanish no it was just because some of my words in Spanish would not come out right so then I was just kind of like embarrassed because you know I couldn't speak it right but I mean after that the more I was able to speak it the more you know I got more comfortable and...(Interview, May 21, 2020).

Giovana portrays her feelings towards speaking the Spanish language. She expresses that she was oftentimes ashamed to speak the language not because she was ashamed of being Hispanic but because she feared being made fun of for not speaking the language well enough compared to others. This response indicates that Giovana did not

frequently practice the Spanish language because she felt ashamed to do so. Giovana shares,

Giovana: Yes, I was embarrassed just because I wasn't fluent in Spanish. I was embarrassed because I was Hispanic I'm Mexican and I felt like I should know perfect Spanish. So that was my big thing I was embarrassed not being able to speak it well. When I did talk it was just like your I guess your "street Spanish"? I mean it wasn't professional or academic Spanish. So, every here now and then I would say words in English just because I couldn't say it in Spanish. (Interview, May 29, 2020)

Giovana continues to share her feeling of embarrassment for not being able to speak perfect Spanish. She states that she feels that she should be able to speak the Spanish language perfectly and fluently because she is Mexican. However, the fact that she feels ashamed holds her back from using the language more.

Giovana: [Connection between language and culture] I think that the Spanish language is a big part of our culture! So, umm I think it is very important to you know not forget about our culture's language. Now I talk to my mom in nothing but Spanish now I don't talk to her in English anymore. Our conversations are always in Spanish. Our family when we get together the majority of our conversations are in English but like let's say mom is in the kitchen doing something and like my brothers and my sisters are together we speak in English but as soon as she comes with us like if we're in the living room or the dining table we all start to speak in Spanish so that we can involve her. So, I think it's very important it's part of our culture. Because it's just a part of who I am it's my

culture. I am very proud of my culture I am proud of being a Latina Mexican it's just no I love it. I just think it's very important. (Interview, May 25, 2020).

Giovana shares her thoughts about language and culture. She believes language and culture are extremely connected. Giovana's response indicates that her native language is a part of her identity; it represents who she is and where she comes from. She shares how her native language allows her to communicate with her family in a more intimately. Giovana also shares how proud she is of being a Latina. She continues to share,

Giovana: [Having to push herself more than her classmates in bilingual education courses] I had a hard time because the rest of the girls in the class they were more fluent in Spanish and well basically it was their dominant language and so a lot of girls that I graduated with their dominant language is Spanish. So, I felt like it was really easy for them and I was just like lost and you know I mean I even had to think "am I even in the right like going for the right career like in education? Should I just go to regular English? Because you know, I feel like I had to do triple the work in those classes. But I just did what I can, I did my best. (Interview, May 29, 2020).

Giovana's statement indicates that she felt like she struggled more than her classmates when she was going through her bilingual education courses. She states that her classmates' dominant language was Spanish. She even says that she felt out of place and questioned if she was pursuing the correct degree. Giovana's statements reflect that her feelings of incompetence lead her to doubt her career choice.

Giovana: [More difficulties in bilingual courses] it's just I don't know it's just hard I always grew up with just friends who just speak like a lot of Hispanics, but their dominant language was also English. So, I didn't have that much practice and we would talk in Spanish here and little words here there but again it wasn't like full on conversations where I was comfortable enough to speak it. So, when I decided to become a teacher you know I felt like because like I mentioned to you earlier, I felt like I had to be bilingual because it's part of my culture and it's something that I'm very proud of. But then again it is something that's really hard because wasn't very fluent growing up in Spanish. Being in those classes it was just very difficult, but I did learn a little bit and I'm still learning now, but it's just I wish my dominant language would be Spanish because you can learn English as your second language you know fast but it's just Spanish that makes it hard. (Interview, May 29, 2020).

Giovana shares her experiences with her friends who were also Hispanic like her. She shares that just like her, their dominant language was also English. Although they did seldomly speak Spanish, the majority of their conversations occurred in English. However, Giovana states that when she decided to become a teacher, she felt that she needed to pursue the bilingual certification because she is a Latina, and she felt that it was part of her culture and she was proud of that.

Researcher: Do you believe the people around you influence and continue to influence the language that you choose to speak? How is that? Why?

Giovana: [Transitioning to use Spanish more as an adult] I do now, I guess because we're older, so we know the importance that it's part of our culture so

now we try to speak Spanish more. I also try to like text in Spanish more just so I can get more practice. Also, with my family I when we get together with my sisters and brothers I mean we always speak English but my mom she knows very little English so whenever she's around we all try to speak Spanish, so I think that helps too. I also speak to my mom in nothing but Spanish. Before when I was younger I would speak to her in English and then she would tell me "no hablame en Español" ("no speak to me in Spanish") and I'd be like "no mom, tu tienes que aprender el Inglés" "no mom you have to learn English") haha and now it's like I regret it. I wish I should've just stuck with Spanish. (Interview, May 29, 2020).

Giovana shares about her transition to the Spanish language now that she is an adult and that she has decided to pursue a career in bilingual education. She shares that she now utilizes the language a lot more often than when she was younger. She makes an effort to speak to her mother in Spanish more often than when she was a little girl.

Giovana also states that she regrets telling her mother that she was the one that needed to learn English. Her statement indicates that as she has grown into an adult, she has gone through a mind shift where she now believes the Spanish language is crucial for her and her career. Giovana continues to share about her statement to her mother,

Giovana: [Telling her mother that she needed to learn English] So, this was like when I was in Elementary when I had told her this. Basically, back then my way of thinking was like we're in America and there's a lot of people that speak nothing but English you know? I thought that was probably my way of thinking and I would tell my mom "no you need to learn English!" I think that's the reason why that came out and she wouldn't get upset but she would be like "hay mira

esta huerca mira lo que me esta diciendo” (“Oh look at this little girl look at what she’s telling me”) telling my brothers or whatever she would just kind of laugh about it but she wasn’t really upset. I guess it was just funny to her that I had said that but I don’t know like I said I was like in elementary I’m not sure if I was like ten or eleven years old but yeah I was in elementary and I felt like I guess we were around a lot of Americans that she was the one that needed to learn English.(Interview, May 29, 2020).

Giovana shares about a time she told her mother about having to learn English. Giovana’s story indicates that as a child, she observed her surroundings, which made her believe that because she was in America and the majority of people in America spoke English, this was the norm. She tells about her thinking as a child and how she tells her mother that she should learn English because they were in America and not the other way around. Her response indicates that her environment influenced the usage of the Spanish and English languages in her life.

Giovana: [Family’s thoughts behind teaching her English at an early age] I guess the same thing, I guess the world around us. That’s why they (siblings) insisted my mom for them to teach me English. For the same fact that I wouldn’t struggle. You know we do live in America and it’s basically mostly you know the language here is just it’s English so they figured they would start me early on that I wouldn’t be struggling growing up. But little did they know they did a big mistake. (Interview, May 29, 2020)

Giovana states that at an early age, her family believed she should learn English so that growing up, she would not struggle to learn the language. She also says at the end,

of her story that in the end it was a big mistake. Giovana's statement indicates that neglecting her native language, in the end, was an error. Giovana also shares,

Giovana: [Suggestions for the college of education] I think that it would have helped me more is like if they in college if they would have prepared us more with that academic language that Spanish academic language. I think that would have helped me being more prepared when taking the test (BTLPT). (Interview, May 21, 2020).

Giovana shares that she believes that she would have benefited from focusing on the practice of the Spanish academic language at the university level. She believes she would have felt more prepared to take the BTLPT. Giovanna shares,

Giovana: [Why she decided to become a bilingual teacher] ...Because I knew that I needed to better myself as well like I'm a Latina it's just like I felt like I needed it too and you know also because I feel like I could relate to the students more and I knew there was a shortage in bilingual teachers so I'm like no I need to. I know Spanish I know how to read it I know how to write it. I just need to practice it more and that's the road I took. (Interview, May 21, 2020)

Giovana expresses taking the path to becoming a bilingual teacher because she felt that she needed to better herself. She believed that she knew the language and that all she needed was practice. Her response indicates that she thought she could complete a bilingual teacher certification and that she could relate to her students better if she did. She expresses just needing more time to practice the language. Giovana shares,

Giovana: [Times she has taken the BTLPT] One and right now I'm doing the remediation because I have to do that before I take it again. Hopefully I'll be done with that soon so that I can take it.

Giovana has taken the BTLPT once and has been unsuccessful. She remains hopeful that after she completes her remediation courses she will be able to register for the exam again and pass it in order to become certified. Giovana ends with,

Giovana: [Past, present, and future in terms of language experiences.] I think where I was before umm you're talking about someone who was not fluent at all in Spanish.

Compared to now that I feel like more comfortable speaking Spanish I can have conversations in Spanish. That's where I'm at now. Where I see myself in the future, I hope to one day be able to present like a whole presentation in Spanish like comfortably you know words flowing and speaking grammatically correct that's where I see myself in the future.

Giovana ends by sharing her experiences in the past, present, and future. Giovana shares that she once was not a fluent Spanish speaker. She compares herself to the present, where she now feels more comfortable holding a conversation in Spanish. Her hopes for the future are ambitious as she hopes to one day be able to present fluently and grammatically correct in Spanish.

Broken Spanish

Estela Morales (Pseudonym) recalls growing up in the United States in a Cuban family. Her first language was Spanish, and she learned English at school. Her story begins like this,

Estela: Okay, so my dad is an immigrant he came he had all his papers, and everything done. He's from Cuba and he came when he was 15 years old to the

United States he came with his mom and with his sister. They're all Cuban and my mom was born here in the United States she was born in Orlando Florida and her parents are immigrants. They also came from Cuba. So, I am the first person in my immediate family to graduate from college. I was born here in the United States as well as all of my brothers. So, we are technically Cuban-American or American Cuban all of my background everyone everyone in my family is Cuban. I don't think it's yeah, it's like or my uncle's my mom's brothers that got married or one of my mom's brothers that got married to someone from a different culture. For the most part, everyone else has been married to Cubans. So that's been very prominent. So, our culture is very pronounced. That's not even I don't think that's the right word. It's a very defined like we do a lot of things that Cubans do, you know, but me personally I have a lot of American traditions so compared to all of my Hispanic friends, I feel like we're a little different because my for example, Christmas and stuff like that. Every Hispanic usually does it the 24th and in my mom's family since she's American and her parents came when they were pretty young. We do everything the 25th like the American culture. So, I have a lot of a lot of both of the cultures and I celebrate a lot of it and yeah. (Interview, May 25, 2020).

Estela shares that her parents are both from Cuban descent. Her mother was born here in the United States, and her father emigrated from Cuba at a young age. Estela is the first in her immediate family to graduate from college. She describes her family as being "very Cuban". She shares that they practice many Cuban traditions, but she also grew up practicing many American traditions. She continues to share about her family,

Researcher: Do both of your parents speak English?

Estela: Yes, both of my parents speak English. My dad prefers not to speak it. I think it was just like an accent thing. He didn't like people like to tell him stuff about his accent or the fact that he mispronounced certain words or what not. So, he always held back more when speaking it, but he does speak it he can understand it. He does all his paperwork in English. He reads it as well has a pretty good vocabulary in English and my mom is very fluent in both English and Spanish. So, if you hear her speaking Spanish you would never think she speaks English and if you hear her speaking English you would never think she speaks Spanish. Yeah, and she is fluent in both reading and writing in both languages. (Interview, May 25, 2020).

Estela shares that her father prefers to speak Spanish even though he knows English because of the accent that he carries. She also shares that her mother speaks both English and Spanish fluently. Estela continues to share,

Researcher: How much Spanish

Estela: [The amount of Spanish she spoke at home growing up] That was my first and only language umm I actually went into school, kindergarten, without knowing how to say anything (in English) and I had an accident in class because I couldn't ask to go to the restroom um, so my (first) language was definitely 100% Spanish. (Interview, May 21, 2020).

Estela begins sharing her experience growing up as a child speaking only the Spanish language. She shares that when she first went to school, she did not know how to speak English, and she had an accident in class because she could not communicate. This

part of Estela's story indicates what most Latinx students in the United States experience at a young age. They begin with Spanish as their first language and then sometimes struggle at the beginning of school if not placed into a bilingual program. She continues to share,

Estela: [Experiences with the Spanish language growing up.] Umm, I can't, don't think my memory goes far back enough to know whether I read Spanish or not when I was very very young, but I always remember being able to read Spanish. It wasn't, like I don't remember having learned how to do that, it just came naturally I guess. I read a lot of Bible stories all in Spanish so we had a series of like stories from the Bible and um they were all in Spanish, so my mom would read that with me. Once I started school like I'm guessing, first, second, third grade that I started reading more English books but the Bible and like Bible stories and all of that was always read in Spanish to me and I was also able to read them in Spanish. Umm yes some. My family is Cuban all of, everyone is Cuban so I remember a lot of like "Laura", the Univision shows like "El Gordo y la Flaca" um those are things that I watched in Spanish, especially when my grandma would take care of us um like her radio was always on in Spanish. Uhhh Church has always been in Spanish for us and I grew up going from the moment that I was born pretty much, uh there really hasn't been any English integrated into that except now maybe that there doing some changes so all of the music that we heard uh in Church was all in Spanish. Um some shows like I mentioned "El Gordo y la Flaca", "Laura", "Caso Cerrado", were in Spanish. So yeah! (Interview, May 21, 2020).

Estela shares that she does not recall where or how she learned Spanish; she does not remember ever not knowing how to read Spanish. She shares that she used to read many Bible stories growing up in Spanish. Once she started school, she began to read more English, but the reading of the Bible stories in Spanish remained a constant. She also recalls watching certain TV shows in Spanish. She also states that she has attended church in Spanish ever since she was born. She also states that church has always remained in Spanish until recently that her church began integrating some English into the church services. She continues to share,

Researcher: Did you ever practice the Spanish language in a high academic level?

Estela: Well if you are referring to academic like strictly school, like in that setting, then I would say no because my school was always in English but in church I feel like you have to speak um I don't know if it would makes sense for me to say quote on quote in an academic with like vocabulary you know it's not just "casa" "carro" you have to be able to express what you are feeling and what you are saying properly so that everyone can understand. So, in that sense I do think that I have spoken Spanish at a more academic level. (Interview, May 21, 2020).

Researcher: Did you ever have the opportunity to practice Spanish in a high academic level?

Well the class that I took for the BTLPT which was your class, um I feel like yeah we even had to record ourselves saying things that I mean they weren't super high up there but you have to be able to express yourself at a timely manner and be able to get your point across in Spanish. So I think that that was one of the places

where we did a little bit more of that and then um, um I taught a lesson in Spanish to children so that was also, yeah you know you have to use some vocabulary not just, you have to know pronombre (pronoun) you know, all that jazz. So, I do think that in that sense maybe but other than that I don't remember a lot of like one on one, I mean academic Spanish speaking times or anything like that. (Interview, May 21, 2020).

When Estela is asked if she has ever used the academic Spanish language, she shares that in K-12 school, she has never experienced this because ever since kindergarten, she began school all in English. She also shares that one place where she recalls utilizing more academic vocabulary in Spanish would have been at church. Estela says that at church you are required to express yourself well in Spanish in front of the congregation. Estela also indicates that when she went through her college program, she attended one class where she was required to express herself in Spanish. She also indicates that there was one time where she had to deliver a lesson in Spanish so, in that course, she had to use higher academic vocabulary in Spanish to be able to complete her assignments. Estela's stories indicate that she did not receive many opportunities to practice the Spanish language in an academic setting other than her church and in two college courses. She continues to share,

Researcher: When do you think you stopped acquiring higher level academic Spanish skills? Like in your schooling age.

Estela: Yeah well, yeah no never because I was never in a dual language program or language immersion. They wanted to take me out and put me in ESOL because I did school here in Florida. So, ESOL is Spanish speaking and um they (parents)

ended up not doing that, they wanted me to just go straight into English and I did. The whole time, yeah. So, I never had like the actual, like this is how you write Spanish, this is how you speak Spanish, it just came very natural to me because of church because my parents spoke it, speak it perfectly, my grandparents, everyone around me. So, I would say that I am pretty fluent in that sense, but I was never like, I think it was the first time that I actually learned “esdrújulas, sobresdrújulas” (classification of words in Spanish based on accent marks), and all those in your class. I heard about it, but I had never been taught how to do it. (Interview, May 21, 2020).

Estela shares her schooling experience growing up. She indicates that she began her schooling years in all English classes in elementary. Her parents decided to opt-out of ESL classes in Florida, which were the two options. Estela shares that she never received formal schooling in Spanish. She was able to write and read in Spanish because the people around her spoke it, and her church environment was also all in Spanish. She explains that she only received formal Spanish instruction in one course in college where she was taught many of the grammar rules for the first time. Estela’s response indicates that she was never given the opportunity to practice her Spanish in a formal academic setting growing up.

Estela: [Parents perspective on the importance of Spanish] ... they (parents) always made it as being to where we had to speak Spanish. It wasn't like “you were born here in the United States and we both speak English so you're going to speak English because you know we're here that's the language that is used here”. It was always more of “you’re Hispanic, I'm going to teach you Spanish and once

you learn Spanish you're going to learn English because you live in the United States and it's a primary language here, so you're going to learn it". So, it was always very English Spanish English Spanish or Spanish and then English.

(Interview, May 25, 2020).

Estela shares that her parents always made it a point to teach her the Spanish language at home. Although she did not attend school, where she received instruction in Spanish, her parents tried to ensure that she learned the language at home. They divided the use of both languages depending on where Estela was. Spanish was for the home, and English was for school. Estela continues to share,

Researcher: In what situations do you find yourself speaking more English and in which more Spanish?

Estela: In church 100% that's all they speak (Spanish) that's all we speak at church and is now I would say like 2017 that they started for the first time doing like an English thing where they actually created a church that's going to be mostly all English. So, in church, I definitely speak Spanish all the time when I speak to my grandparents I speak Spanish all the time with my dad the same thing. And then my husband my family my in-laws on all of his family I speak to them in Spanish. I can speak to them in English if I wanted to and they would understand me but for the most part I feel like when I'm speaking to my family I speak Spanish. That's when I yeah that church some friends not all of them here in Texas most of my friends I speak to them in English however, when I go to Florida over there I speak Spanish a lot more, okay. I speak more English in school, obviously, it's not unless we have like a specific Spanish-based class or

like the class BTLPT that class was obviously all in Spanish. And then I had another one I was just remembering at UHD that it had something to do with Biliteracy for Spanish speakers or something like that if I'm not mistaking. There I was able to present lessons in Spanish and I had the ability to do so if I wanted to. "Oh, you can if you want to present a lesson in English you can do that but if you want to do the lesson in Spanish you can also do that". So, in that sense, I think I did a little bit of Spanish for the most part all English. When I'm speaking to friends like I said here it's all in English with my brother I speak a lot of English and my husband like we interact a lot in English, although well do would talk in Spanish and we both are very fluent in Spanish. But it's just I guess a natural thing to just go into English. So, I think in everything else other than like church and very family-oriented ambiances. Everything else is English.

(Interview, May 25, 2020).

Estela shares her experiences with both languages; she states that she tends to speak more Spanish when she is around her family, such as her parents and at her church, because everything in church is mostly in Spanish. She also shares that she chooses to speak to the majority of her friends in English. She also shares that in school, with her siblings and her husband, she tends to speak more English. Her response indicates that she uses the English language a lot more than her Spanish in most situations where she interacts on a daily basis.

Researcher: Which language do you consider stronger, English or Spanish?

Estela: English simply because I feel like my vocabulary like if I'm writing I have a bigger broader vocabulary than if I were speaking in Spanish. I can speak to you

in Spanish and I can find my ways of saying things however because it's not an academic, I don't think it's an academic level my language or my my vocabulary is going to be a little bit more rudimentary and Yeah, I wouldn't I think if I had to say which one I were stronger in definitely English. Unless, I'm speaking like a Cuban and that's really weird. That probably makes no sense but for example there's words that Cubans use ways of saying things that are super wrong super incorrect they're not like how things are said or anything like that in that case I'm very very fluent and I'm fairly strong. I know when things are incorrect or when things are said wrong, but I think I'm definitely stronger in English than I would be in Spanish. (Interview, May 25, 2020).

When Estela was asked which language she considered stronger, she was quick to respond that English was the strongest for her. She states that she considers her English vocabulary to be broader than her Spanish vocabulary. She describes her Spanish vocabulary to be more rudimentary. Estela expresses that she does, however, feel very comfortable speaking Spanish like a Cuban. She explains that the everyday vocabulary that Cubans use is very different and grammatically incorrect and that in that sense, she would consider herself a very fluent Spanish speaker. Estela's description of her native language use, in this case, Spanish, indicates that she does not feel that she has the academic vocabulary in Spanish to be able to speak it formally and that she feels more comfortable speaking in English.

Estela: [Perspective on feeling ashamed to speak Spanish] I guess in my case it was a little different because I grew up in Florida and everyone around me was Hispanic. So, speaking Spanish wasn't necessarily something that I was ashamed

of ever. I mean I think maybe once or twice I was in a specific setting and speaking Spanish was definitely not a “cool” thing to do so I didn’t I would just speak English in that case also because no one has ever looked at me and been like “oh you’re Hispanic” I always get like you look middle eastern or what not so like it’s never been like that thing on me like oh you’re Hispanic you speak Spanish no I spoke English if I needed to and then if I had to speak Spanish I would speak Spanish but I didn’t feel bad about doing it because all of my friends did it. They spoke Spanish so I guess in that sense it was a little bit easier for me because I feel like had I been in a different atmosphere I would’ve felt the same way that Carolina did that it was embarrassing so I guess that is why it was a little different for me. (Interview, May 29, 2020).

In the focus group, when Estela was asked if she ever felt ashamed to speak Spanish, Estela responds that because of the environment where she grew up and the people around her, she had not experienced being ashamed of speaking her first language. Estela expresses that she grew up in a Hispanic community where her friends also spoke, and it was very common for her to do so as well. However, she does, recall times when it was not “cool” to speak Spanish and in those cases she made sure to speak English only. Estela shares that she is not usually associated with the Hispanic race; instead people often believe she is middle eastern, that too eases the shame that she might have felt. Estela shares that had she grown up in a different type of atmosphere, then perhaps she also would have felt embarrassed to speak Spanish. Estela shares,

Researcher: Do you believe language is connected to your culture in any form or way and why?

Estela: Yeah, definitely. Music the Cuban culture is very this is going to sound a little weird but it's very auditory the way that we speak, the music that we listen to. I've never been to Cuba but from the things that I've heard from my family, I have plenty of family that lives over there dancing is a huge thing, you know, and you dance to music everything is in Spanish. Poetry, there's this thing in Cuba called "Decimas" I don't know if that's everywhere. I'm not too sure about that. But I know that in Cuba they write "Decimas" and they're like poems almost like half sung half said poetry and so I mean and that's all in Spanish, you know. When we get together with our family the things that we talked about are usually very like they date back to when they were in Cuba and the things that they did while they were in Cuba. So, I mean even in the sense I guess you could say that just being family as a cultural thing, you know, just hanging out with the family and doing parties and all of that all of those things, I guess. Yeah, they're done in Spanish and so I don't know if that would tie into that. So, if they took away Spanish from me, I'd only be holding on to my American traditions and so like the things I've done here. I wouldn't but I don't think I'd be able to like link my family and I don't know it would be it would be really weird because a lot of the a lot of what I do is all in Spanish, you know, like just being able to be with my family and communicate with them I would lose that. So yeah, I definitely do think that a lot of my culture would be taken away from me. (Interview, May 25, 2020).

Estela shares that she believes language and culture are closely connected with each other. She shares that many of her traditions and the events she holds with her family would be very different if she suddenly lost the Spanish language. Estela's story

indicates that language is definitely a part of who she is, and a big part of her culture would be taken away from her if she were to lose the Spanish language. Estela continues to share about her experience at the university,

Estela: [Recommendation for the college of education] start from a basic level and I know that's difficult and I don't mean like start from a basic level teaching like "house", "car", um obviously in college anyone who is going to be doing Spanish it's because they know Spanish for the most part it's because you already know Spanish so you're going to go ahead and do that but I think that a lot of people that go into um, for example the bilingual program lack a lot of and I'm included in this statement, lack a lot of the basics of Spanish. Like understanding why some words have the silent "h" and others don't, understanding the accents, understanding um like the differences between "s" and "c", what to put what, I don't know if that makes sense. A lot of like the grammatical, the grammatical stuff and all of that um, I feel like in order for us to be more successful, starting from down there we'll be better because, and I see that um that very... yeah I saw that a lot in your class because you started off with the accents you know? Well, "here let's do this so that you guys can know this", and I feel like that's something basic that we should've known, you know? A lot of schools in other countries, Spanish speaking countries, are doing that with their kids. So, um I know people that have taken the same class with another teacher and haven't been taught that. So, I feel like that was a great thing for us to have learned and it's even going to help us now in our exams, to know that and be able to practice that, I think it's yeah awesome! (Interview, May 21, 2020).

Estela shares that she would have benefited from her college courses much more if she would have learned some of the grammatical rules that she lacked from the Spanish language. She continues to share,

Estela: I don't want to say starting the basics like, I don't mean like starting from zero like I said before "yo me llamo Estela". Like that's very rudimentary you should have learned that in kindergarten. But I just mean like the basic things that are very important for us as teachers to know. For example, the accents in Spanish. You were the only teacher that I ever had that taught me how to properly write accents, where to write them, and I feel like those are the types of things that when we go into a classroom if we have a kid that came directly from Mexico and is super good at writing and speaking Spanish that's when we're going to be like "maestra no se escribe así se escribe" and I'm like uhhh yeah you're right because I don't know I have to go out of my way to figure out how to write the accents. To where I think that it would be amazing if the school were to come and show us things like that. That would be important for us to know when we're in a classroom. There are certain words in Spanish that... well just like in English but I'm going to give an example like the "H" use "hacer" and I know it sounds super dumb but I feel like if they explained some of the grammatical things in Spanish to us we would not feel as intimidated going into a classroom with a bunch of Spanish speaking kids who have Spanish speaking parents and looking at us like we have no idea what we're doing as people who have just graduated to do this. You know if I had graduated just to be a regular teacher and then I have to go out of my way on my own to learn something in Spanish to be able to teach a certain

group of kids then I would think it's ok to for me to make mistakes or feel as though I'm not up to par or up to the expectation but being that I graduated with a bilingual certification, I think it's really important for us to know everything before going in there and sometimes some of the things that we're lacking is some very basic stuff. We're able to speak it, we're going to make mistakes here and there but then when it comes to the nitty gritty teaching little kids how to do it? I feel...in my case those are things I was never really taught. Like I mentioned to you, I learned how to speak and write and read pretty much on my own because I didn't have that bilingual program in Florida so obviously when I do it now then I have some mistakes in there and I'm not going to necessarily be able to explain to a kid why a word is "esdrújula" if I don't even know that you know. So those are sort of like the basic things that I mean that I feel that would really help. I had another teacher two semesters ago and she was like "this isn't part of the class but I'm just going to go ahead and explain to you guys how to do this and she... showed us some tips and tricks in Spanish that would help us as teachers. The fact that that wasn't in the curriculum and she went out of her way to incorporate that because she saw it as something very important I think said something. She saw the need for us as teachers, as Hispanics, bilingual teachers to learn those things and therefore she put it in there, but it isn't something that is required for these teachers to teach if that makes sense. (Interview, May 29, 2020).

Estela goes into detail about her experiences in her college courses. She states that she feels the responsibility to end college well prepared to be a bilingual teacher because she earned a bilingual teaching degree. However, she explains that because she did not

receive much formal schooling in Spanish many of the grammatical errors that she makes are evident in her work. Estela explains that she would have liked to receive more than one or two courses where she felt she had the opportunity to develop her Spanish language in the academic form that is very much needed in the bilingual classroom.

Estela continues to share why she decided to pursue a bilingual certification,

Estela: I've always wanted to help, help people, help kids. I feel like the fact that I would be able to help students in Spanish and in English just gives me so much more that I can do. But I think also because I was bilingual when I was small and there is a struggle. It's a struggle to be in school and only speak Spanish and what if your teacher doesn't like understand. When I grew up in Florida there was only a program called ESOL so if you were in ESOL program teaching you that maybe spoke Spanish and that could communicate with you, but I wasn't in the program. My mom wanted me to do school in English and at home Spanish and so it was very difficult. There were times where I didn't know what to say I didn't know anything. So just being a bilingual teacher and just knowing that these kids are not going to understand anything I can be like ok tell me what's wrong I can help you and that's a very big thing. Also, because it's part of who I am it's part of my culture just speaking Spanish so why not do it when I can as opposed to just being a regular generalist teacher who can just teach why not use what I have for my advantage and to the advantage of others because that's something I'm going to be sharing and not keeping to myself. So, I may be able to speak Spanish so I can share that, and I can help other people also why would I withhold that from everyone. (Interview, May 21, 2020).

Estela shares why she decided to pursue this career. She explains that her own experiences growing up have led her to pursue a career where she can support other students who are trying to learn English as a second language. Estela also shares that this career is part of who she is and part of her culture. Estela ends the conversation with,

Estela: [Past, present, and future in terms of language experiences.] I feel like before when I lived in Florida, my Spanish was a little better. Now I've stopped using it as much although I will say that although my Spanish was better because I was a lot more fluent speaking it 24/7 I feel like now I have learned a little bit more of the proper Spanish because my husband's family speaks it. So, I have just learned a lot from them, but I hope that in the future I can be academically up to par with what it is that I need to know with Spanish. I don't want to be like a mediocre teacher that doesn't really know what she's doing especially in the Spanish area because I'm teaching kids and I don't want to teach them incorrectly or I don't want them to be rid of something because I'm not where I need to be. So, I hope that I can grow in that area so that I can help other people.

Estela ends by sharing her previous experience with Spanish where she believes she was more fluent because she constantly practiced the language. In the present she feels that her Spanish language is not as fluent, but she has now acquired a bit more of the academic language because she has heard and listened to more proper conversations from her husband's family. For the future, Estela hopes to be able to succeed as a bilingual teacher. She desires to teach the children well, and she does not want them to lose their native language for reasons that pertain to her Spanish language proficiency. She states that she does not want to be a mediocre teacher that does not know what she is doing.

This Also Happened to Me

This story begins with me. My name is Jacqueline Aguilar. I am the last child born to my parents. My parents are both immigrants from the country of Mexico. They

came to the United States when they were in their twenties. I was born in their thirties. My parents never really learned English. My mother states that my father spent the majority of his time working to support our family of six, plus my mother, leaving very little leisure time or even time to try and study somewhere. My mother also shares that she spent most of her time tending for my five brothers and me. She expresses that she tried attending some English classes at some point but was unable to stay committed because of the responsibility she held with us. Therefore, Spanish became my first language and the first language of my siblings. This is how that story goes.

I recall entering kindergarten with Spanish as my first language. I did not attend Pre-K because my mother opted to keep me home. However, she did a great job of reading books to me and teaching me how to write my name and the alphabet. I recall having a cousin who did attend Pre-K, and she had learned the English language in Pre-K. I remember the chatter between my mother and my aunts about my cousin learning English and how proud they were of her. I still had no clue how to hold a conversation in English. It was a bit embarrassing for me that I could not speak or read English and my cousin who was my same age did. That moment marked me even though I did not realize it.

When entering kindergarten, I was placed into a bilingual program where I was split between two teachers, one who taught me English, and another that taught me Spanish. I excelled in my English acquisition so much that by the time I reached the end of second grade, I was placed in a Gifted and Talented class and exited from the bilingual program. Between third and fourth grade, all of the instruction I received was all in English. Therefore, after reflecting on my Spanish development, I can state that my

Spanish academic language came to a halt at the end of the second grade and spent the next two years learning in English. My Spanish language was then only utilized at home when speaking to my parents.

Before I entered elementary school, I had learned the ABCs and the numbers 1-10 in English from my older brother. I spoke fluent Spanish; however, I had not been exposed to academic Spanish only conversational Spanish. At the end of fourth, grade my parents decided that we were moving to Mexico. I was ten years old at the time. There I experienced culture shock. I recall being made fun of by my classmates by the way I spoke and wrote Spanish. I had many grammatical errors. I mispronounced, and I utilized a lot of anglicisms. It was difficult to understand many of the simple academic words my teacher used because I had never heard them. I had not developed my academic skills in Spanish. I had stopped developing my native language at the end of second grade, and now that I was in fifth grade, I was expected to pick it back up. That was one of the most difficult challenges I faced.

Moving forward, I spent five of my schooling years in Mexico. I attended school in Mexico between the years of fifth through the ninth grade. All of the instruction I received in Mexico was in Spanish, except for our foreign language course, English. This opportunity allowed me to develop my native language academically. An opportunity that I would not have had if I would have stayed in the United States. However, this caused my second language development to come to a halt because I stopped developing my English while in Mexico. The language usage became a problem for me. In the tenth grade, I had the opportunity to move back to the United States where I finished high school and entered the university. At this point, I had to switch back to English and begin

developing my vocabulary in my second language, which had stopped. Compared to my classmates, my English vocabulary was at the level of a fourth grader, where I had stopped developing the language.

My experience moving to Mexico and attending school in my native language allowed me to develop my Spanish academic language. This was an opportunity that many of my classmates in the United States did not have. As I entered my first bilingual preparation courses at the university I realized that I had an advantage over several of my classmates. I had been immersed in my native language and felt very comfortable speaking in Spanish. I recall several others struggling to communicate in their native language and frequently utilizing English as a “crutch” to get the message across when they could not think of the Spanish terms. They also often seemed embarrassed when they could not give a complete message in Spanish, and yet they were trying to become bilingual teachers. I recall having conversations with my classmates. They shared that they never really were required to speak in Spanish in an academic setting. They grew up speaking Spanish to their parents, but that was it. They had not been required to read or write in Spanish because they had attended an English-only program. They had not had the opportunity to develop their native language in an academic setting like I had.

As I read through some of Kathy Escamilla’s work, I found that she shares that research has clearly demonstrated positive effects for native-language instruction over English-only models. I continue to wonder why many of our school districts across the United States push for our students to acquire English but neglect Spanish development. After arriving in Mexico at the age of ten and spending five years in Mexico. I was able to develop my academic language in Spanish. Through the immersion of the language, I

was also able to immerse myself in the culture of Mexico. I felt privileged that I had not just developed academically but also culturally. I became very proud of my roots and wanted to share it with the rest of my family. Upon my return to the United States at the age of fifteen, I found that my cousins who had grown up here and attended English only programs had encountered Spanish language attrition. They even seemed ashamed to use the language because they did not feel very comfortable speaking it. They seemed embarrassed and worried that others would make fun of them and opted to speak only in English. Perhaps if I had not had the opportunity to study in Mexico, I would have been in the same situation. Which makes me wonder how much of a chance I would have had to become a bilingual teacher in the United States?

When it came my time to take the Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test (BTLPT) during my undergraduate years, I felt very prepared even though I had not studied the manual or taken a test prep course. I was told that the exam was only to measure how well I spoke, listened, read, and wrote in Spanish. All domains in which I felt more than prepared. The university program that I went through prepared us for the bilingual content exam but provided little opportunity to prepare us for the BTLPT. However, because I had attended school in Mexico where I was immersed in the Spanish language I felt very comfortable with my academic Spanish proficiency. Three days before my exam I looked through the manual for the BTLPT to familiarize myself with the timing, the kinds of questions asked, and the format. However, I knew several of my classmates were worried about passing the exam and were studying arduously for it on their own. I was able to pass the exam and was short thirteen points from a perfect score, which equaled a 95% on a 100% scale. I was very proud of my score. I scored above

three of my other classmates that I asked at the time. One of my classmates, I recall, had to take the exam more than one time. It was difficult for her to find a job as a bilingual teacher without passing that test.

I clearly remember an interview that I had at the campus where I taught. I had thoroughly enjoyed my experience there, and my dream was to become a teacher at that campus. A position opened up at the campus, and the principal there scheduled an interview with me. The interesting part of this interview was that the assistant principal was also present during my interview. The principal had asked him to attend so that he could have a conversation with me in Spanish. I felt very confident to speak in Spanish with him, and I think that helped me provide adequate answers to him. During that same interview the principal asked me to rate my Spanish proficiency from a 1-10 to which I responded a nine or ten. I did not want to sound like I knew it all, but I felt very confident with my Spanish proficiency. He then also asked me to rate my English proficiency from a 1-10 to which I responded an eight and he was surprised and asked me why? I responded, “well I was immersed in the Spanish language during my middle school years, and Spanish is my native language therefore, I have practiced it more. I just feel like I need to develop my English a bit more”. He responded to me, “well, I think your English sounds very good to me”. I answered, thank you. I wonder what my classmates would have answered to that question? It was out of my classmates’ hands to be highly proficient in a language they had not had the opportunity to develop.

When I was in my undergraduate program and then later, when I was working at the elementary level, I encountered several classmates and some colleagues who spoke Spanish but had not pursued a bilingual education. I recall asking them why they had not

sought the bilingual certification to which they responded, “I just don’t think I could pass the BTLPT test; my Spanish is not that good”. A colleague responded, “well, I haven’t been able to pass the BTLPT, so I decided to just teach ESL”. It has always been a question of mine of what factors influenced their loss of their native language or the reasons why they have struggled to pass that test. I also wonder if, in the future they might attempt to take the BTLPT.

A few years ago, I became an adjunct professor at a local university. At the university, I began teaching some of the courses for bilingual teacher preparation. One, in particular, was a test prep course provided for students before taking the BTLPT. As I gave my introduction course and requested introductions from students, I was able to listen to their Spanish proficiency by listening to an introduction. In my head, I divided my students into three categories, students who I thought might be successful on the first try, students who might struggle but would pass perhaps on the second try, and students who had a small chance or no chance of being successful unless more Spanish development occurred. I could already tell which students might have a higher chance of being successful on the BTLPT exam even before taking the course. I could also distinguish which students might struggle to pass the exam a bit more and which have a minimal chance of passing it. The students who had a high chance of being successful had an opportunity to develop their Spanish language at an early age. They attended school in a Spanish speaking country where they were completely immersed in the language. The students who had a probability to pass the exam but might struggle were students who learned Spanish as their first language in the United States but were only given a small opportunity to develop their Spanish in an academic setting. The students

who I classified with a small chance to pass the exam were students who learned Spanish but did not have much practice, not even in their homes; they were second or third generation immigrants.

I have been listening to my students from the local university that are enrolled in a BTLPT test prep course. As I have listened to their conversations I have been trying to best prepare them to take the BTLPT exam. However, from the conversations I have heard, I have noticed that several of my students might not be successful in their first try. After one of my classes, one of my students approached me and told me she was apprehensive about the course. She came from a second-generation immigrant home. She had grown up in the United States and had mostly spoken English all of her life. She told me, “I’m going to give my best effort in this class, but I don’t know if I’ll be able to pass it. I do not really speak much Spanish, and I listen to my classmates and feel so lost”. In this class, I had a wide range of Spanish language proficiency among my students. I had some who were very fluent Spanish speakers and several who struggled all semester. I wish there were more ways that we could support our students in the bilingual teacher preparation program.

As I had been grading the work of my students from the local university throughout the past semester, I had noticed that some of my students would still need further support as they continued to pursue their career in bilingual education. I knew I had several students who could benefit from taking my BTLPT test prep course for another semester or at least a course similar to this one that developed their Spanish proficiency. I continued to wonder what other things we could do as the College of Education to continue to support their success.

Emerging Themes Across Narratives

After analyzing each individual story told by the participants and the researcher, data were triangulated, and significant themes emerged across the narratives. The following subsections will present the findings of the analysis of the narratives. Each emergent theme will represent how each participant response provided the emergent theme. This allows us to pinpoint how each of the stories are different but yet connected.

Theme #1 The Participants Noted that Students are Influenced by the Environment Regarding the Use of the Native Language

All three participants expressed that they were influenced one way or another regarding their use of the native language by their environments.

Carolina expresses:

Yes [parents thought learning English was more important than Spanish], so I know that my mom she always said that she just umm she wanted this life here in America to be as easy as possible for me growing up here. So, she was all for me learning English. I mean the Spanish part it didn't really bother her if I spoke Spanish or not because I mentioned before in the last meeting that I would talk to her in English. But my family was the one that was actually very upset that umm her not pushing the Spanish on me. But obviously they didn't live here, and they didn't know what it's like you know the circumstances and everything of living here so she was pro pushing English but now I think after so many number of years she sees the value in knowing both languages. (Interview, May 27, 2020).

Carolina's response indicates that she was influenced beginning by her parents. Her parents believed it was very important for her to learn the English language and did

not push her to use or learn the Spanish language. She also expresses that her mother did not really mind if she used the Spanish language or not.

Carolina expresses:

So, I feel like I just stopped using my Spanish like I didn't use it as much I think it was middle school/ high school time and I think it was because of the people I hung around with or I just saw the language as an embarrassment. I hit a point in my life I remember cause it was Mr. Salazar my Spanish teacher he hated me and me and I realize it now he highly disliked me because he knew I was Latin, I mean my name was "Carolina Gonzalez" like you know it doesn't get more foreign well you know and I know that he disliked me because he knew that I spoke Spanish but I would fake it, that I didn't know how to speak Spanish and I guess I did it because I wanted to like be cool or like I don't know I hung out with a lot of white people at that time so I was possibly like embarrassed like speaking another language and all that so I know that's the time that I truly I didn't use it at all I didn't have any Hispanic friends like at all so I didn't ever use the language I think it was because my friends influenced it. Obviously that's the time for a child for like hormones and you're just trying to fit in, so I allowed I followed the crowd. Peer pressure 100%. (Interview, May 29, 2020)

Carolina's response indicates that she did not use the Spanish language as much because of the people she spent time with. She expresses that her friends were white and that she saw the language as an embarrassment. Carolina also shares that she tries to fit in with her friends and therefore neglects her Spanish language.

Carolina expresses: ...and then I went to Peru and when I came back from Peru I went there for a month and that kind of like changed my whole outlook seeing my family and my culture at a you know when you're I guess an adult seeing your culture and your family it's just different. I don't know if this is making sense and then slowly all of Dr. Guerra's class was all in Spanish so that's how I knew I had to just push myself I mean I remember talking to Monica, Monica and Lorena they would just say "let it flow" the Spanish and I was like I can understand you 100% but I cannot flow I can't speak such fluent Spanish like you do. (Interview, May 23, 2020).

Carolina shares her experience visiting her parents' home country and being in an environment where she was immersed in the Spanish language. This experience changed Carolina's outlook on the Spanish language and her culture. Carolina also shares that her experience being in Dr. Guerra's class allowed her to use the Spanish language in an environment where she felt that she needed to grow and "push herself".

Carolina expresses:

...since I've gotten married my husband is Brazilian and all his friends are Latin so through them and meeting all the Latins I mean I feel like I have to speak Spanish it's just embarrassing I mean I speak Spanglish but once I get comfortable the Spanish flows but I just see myself I guess in this era of my life I'm speaking the most Spanish I have ever spoken in my entire life from what I can recall. (Interview, May 27, 2020)

Carolina explains that now that she is married she is surrounded by more Latinx friends where she feels that she needs to speak the language. Her story indicates that she is influenced by her environment to have to speak the language.

Carolina expresses:

Now that I've learned so much about being bilingual and that I'm not the only one that feels this way it kind of inspires me and lets me know I'm not alone. Because it is intimidating to be in classes with fluent Spanish speakers but it's just we all grew up differently, we all have different experiences that led us to where we are today. (Interview, May 29, 2020).

Carolina shares her feeling of intimidation being in a class full of fluent Spanish speakers. She acknowledges that they all had different experiences growing up, but she continues to feel intimidated. Her new knowledge as an adult allows her to see that there are many others like herself that also might feel intimidated but that inspires her and lets her know she is not alone.

Giovana expresses:

Giovana: Umm as a child in the beginning let's say like around four or five years old that was my first language so only Spanish. I was talking around that age. It wasn't until Kinder when they moved me to an English class because my sister in law she taught me English so cause I knew nothing but Spanish and she was umm white and she was like "oh no she's like I'm going to teach you English" so then I learned English before kinder and they put me in an English class and ever since then it's just like been like English English. (Interview, May 21, 2020).

Giovana expresses that she began schooling in English because she was taught the English language in her home. Her sister in law believed it was very important that she learn English at an early age and told Giovana's mother that she would teach her English. Giovana's story indicates that she was influenced at home to use English by her family members.

Giovana expresses:

But umm yeah it was just around third grade when I just started slowly like losing the Spanish language. And it wasn't until I got to like high school when I started talking more cause I guess cause of my friends and I was like really into like Spanish music like you know like "norteñas" (a genre of traditional music from Mexico) and all of that so it was just I guess when I started speaking it more. (Interview, May 21, 2020).

Giovana shares that she stopped using the Spanish language around the third grade and then picked it back up when she was in high school. She shares that many of her friends were Hispanic and they spoke Spanish. She also shares that she started liking music in Spanish and that also influenced her use of the language.

Giovana expresses:

[Feeling ashamed to speak Spanish] I did because I would not sound out words not because I'm ashamed of you know living in America and speaking Spanish no it was just because some of my words in Spanish would not come out right so then I was just kind of like embarrassed because you know I couldn't speak it right but I mean after that the more I was able to speak it the more you know I got more comfortable and...(Interview, May 21, 2020).

Giovana also shares that she was ashamed to speak Spanish because she could not pronounce some of the words correctly. She shares how she felt ashamed to speak in front of others because she might be made fun of.

Giovana expresses:

Yes, I was embarrassed just because I wasn't fluent in Spanish. I was embarrassed because I was Hispanic I'm Mexican and I felt like I should know perfect Spanish. (Interview, May 29, 2020).

Giovana continues to share that she was embarrassed to use the Spanish language because she was not fluent, and she believed that because she is Mexican she should know perfect Spanish.

Giovana expresses:

[Having to push herself more than her classmates in bilingual education courses] I had a hard time because the rest of the girls in the class they were more fluent in Spanish and well basically it was their dominant language and so a lot of girls that I graduated with their dominant language is Spanish. So, I felt like it was really easy for them and I was just like lost and you know I mean I even had to think "am I even in the right like going for the right career like in education? Should I just go to regular English? Because you know, I feel like I had to do triple the work in those classes. But I just did what I can, I did my best. (Interview, May 29, 2020).

Giovana shares her feeling of intimidation when she was around her classmates at the university. She felt that her classmates were more dominant in the Spanish language

than she was. She even arrived at the point where she questioned if she had made the right career choice.

Giovana expresses:

[More difficulties in bilingual courses] it's just I don't know it's just hard I always grew up with just friends who just speak like a lot of Hispanics, but their dominant language was also English. So, I didn't have that much practice and we would talk in Spanish here and little words here there but again it wasn't like full on conversations where I was comfortable enough to speak it.

Giovana shares that the majority of her friends were Hispanic, but they never really spoke Spanish. Their dominant language was English, and they chose to speak in English. She shares that because of this she did not have much practice in the Spanish language.

Giovana: [Family's thoughts behind teaching her English at an early age] I guess the same thing, I guess the world around us. That's why they (siblings) insisted my mom for them to teach me English. For the same fact that I wouldn't struggle. You know we do live in America and it's basically mostly you know the language here is just it's English so they figured they would start me early on that I wouldn't be struggling growing up. But little did they know they did a big mistake. (Interview, May 29, 2020)

Giovana shares that English became her most used language when her siblings insisted to her mother to allow them to teach her English. Giovana was influenced by her family members to learn the English language at an early age because this is what they believed was the most important.

Estela expresses:

Estela: [The amount of Spanish she spoke at home growing up] That was my first and only language umm I actually went into school, kindergarten, without knowing how to say anything (in English) and I had an accident in class because I couldn't ask to go to the restroom um, so my (first) language was definitely 100% Spanish. (Interview, May 21, 2020).

Estela shares that Spanish was her native language. She grew up in a household where only Spanish was spoken to her, and therefore, she used the language 100% of the time.

Estela expresses:

...but the Bible and like Bible stories and all of that was always read in Spanish to me and I was also able to read them in Spanish. Umm yes some. My family is Cuban all of, everyone is Cuban so I remember a lot of like "Laura", the Univision shows like "El Gordo y la Flaca" um those are things that I watched in Spanish, especially when my grandma would take care of us um like her radio was always on in Spanish. Uhhh Church has always been in Spanish for us and I grew up going from the moment that I was born pretty much, uh there really hasn't been any English integrated into that except now maybe that there doing some changes so all of the music that we heard uh in Church was all in Spanish. Um some shows like I mentioned "El Gordo y la Flaca", "Laura", "Caso Cerrado", were in Spanish. So yeah! (Interview, May 21, 2020).

Estela shares that she has been influenced by her environments to speak and listen to the Spanish language. Her stories indicate that she has been influenced to use the

Spanish language at church, at her home, and with her family members. She vividly recalls some of her experiences with the Spanish language growing up.

Estela expresses:

They wanted to take me out and put me in ESOL because I did school here in Florida. So, ESOL is Spanish speaking and um they (parents) ended up not doing that, they wanted me to just go straight into English and I did. The whole time, yeah. So, I never had like the actual, like this is how you write Spanish, this is how you speak Spanish, it just came very natural to me because of church because my parents spoke it, speak it perfectly, my grandparents, everyone around me.

Estela shares that later in life when she began K-12 schooling, she was directly placed in an all English classroom with no Spanish supports. She then stopped using the Spanish language in school and never received formal instruction in Spanish growing up.

Estela expresses:

...It was always more of “you’re Hispanic, I’m going to teach you Spanish and once you learn Spanish you’re going to learn English because you live in the United States and it’s a primary language here, so you’re going to learn it”. So, it was always very English Spanish English Spanish or Spanish and then English.

(Interview, May 25, 2020).

Estela shares that in her household, her parents portrayed the importance of speaking Spanish at home. She shares that her parents made it clear that she needed to learn Spanish at home and English in school. Once again indicating her usage of each language based on her environment.

Estela expresses:

[Perspective on feeling ashamed to speak Spanish] I guess in my case it was a little different because I grew up in Florida and everyone around me was Hispanic. So, speaking Spanish wasn't necessarily something that I was ashamed of ever. I mean I think maybe once or twice I was in a specific setting and speaking Spanish was definitely not a "cool" thing to do so I didn't I would just speak English in that case

Estela shares that she grew up in Florida, where she had many Hispanic friends. Speaking Spanish was not something to be ashamed of because it was very common among her friends. She does express that there were occasions where she felt that speaking Spanish was not "cool" and she chose not to do so based on the environment where she was at.

These stories shared by the three participants indicated that each of them was influenced either to use or not to use the Spanish language based on the environment where they were. One shares that in her household her parents did not push her to learn the Spanish language or to use it in conversations with her parents. The other participant shares that her mother was influenced by older children to teach her daughter the English language because it was important for her to learn it at an early age. The other participant expresses the importance that her parents taught her about learning and practicing the Spanish language at home but attending English only classrooms in school. Each of the participants share how their usage of the Spanish language changed based on the environment where they were and continue to be.

Theme #2 The Participants Noted that there is a Need for K-12 Schooling Systems to Offer Programs that Promote Biliteracy

A person who is biliterate can read and write proficiently in two languages. Throughout the study, the participants continuously shared their insecurities with their native language. Some of the participants were placed in programs where they only learned in English in the K-12 schooling system because programs that promoted biliteracy were not offered at their schools. This took away from the participant's opportunity to learn how to read and write in their native language proficiently. This also lead to some of the insecurities that now they hold as adults pursuing a bilingual certification.

Carolina expresses:

[Reasoning behind her English (second language) being stronger than Spanish (her first language)]. I know on my part I remember my mom put me in head start, and head start was only provided in English and I actually learned in my college courses, we took an undergrad course about the history in bilingual education and ESL education so that's where I learned like the history of Bilingual and ESL education makes sense to why what happened to me. (Interview, May 29, 2020).

Carolina shares that she was placed in the Head Start program that was only provided in English. This is where it all started for Carolina.

Carolina expresses:

I think that's where it all transitioned in the school and also in the ESL program I learned that the reasons why some schools have dual language programs two-way, one-way, bilingual programs, early exit, late exit it never made sense to me. Like

when I first learned about that in our undergrad process I thought why didn't I get bilingual programs? Was it because the area that I lived in was racist? But no, it wasn't because of the racism it was because of what the community needed and at that time there was not enough Hispanic people in the community that I grew up in to have a bilingual program so that's why I only had an ESL program. So, I remember being in ESL with like Sasha, I still remember Sasha from Norway I remember we were all foreigners in this class I remember. It was just like the history, like this is why. I mean I should not blame it on my education, but it was because they couldn't provide the program for us. It's already such a struggle find bilingual teachers but it's where I grew up. They didn't have it so then they placed me in ESL which you know the only time that I ever got Spanish was at home. I think that's where it all begins. (Interview, May 29, 2020).

Carolina expresses:

Referring back to what the other ladies were saying, it just kind of clicked in my head like Giovana, when I was younger I also did speak the Spanish language but I also feel like because I was in ESL classes and there was no bilingual program when I grew up, I was only in an ESL program and I feel like the ESL programs were just like frowned upon or they weren't looked at as just like being in a regular class or a GT class and I think that's where it all stimulated from. Like the way teachers or the others perceived the ESL class is what made me embarrassed about the language... (Interview, May 29, 2020).

Carolina shares that she was placed in an ESL program in elementary school. She did not receive the opportunity to attend a bilingual program where her Spanish could

continue to develop. She attributes her struggle with the Spanish language to this decision.

Carolina: Yes, I have taken it [the BTLPT] three times. Correct [Passed it the third time].

I think [made her unsuccessful the first two times] I was unsuccessful because I remember talking to Monica and Lorena [classmates] and all the girls and the girls were like oh it's not that hard, you'll be fine, your Spanish isn't that bad, you'll be ok. Of course, all my friends that were in the class with us they all either were in bilingual education and their Spanish was way better than mine, but I didn't I didn't know you know I didn't know that. So, I just went in the first time and I just took it just to see what it was, and I did horrible... (Interview, May 23, 2020).

Carolina shares that as opposed to her university classmates, she was never in a bilingual program and therefore never received formal instruction in Spanish until she attended her bilingual courses at the university. She attributes once again, her struggle with the Spanish language to this.

Giovana expresses:

Umm as a child in the beginning let's say like around four or five years old that was my first language so only Spanish. I was talking around that age. It wasn't until Kinder when they moved me to an English class because my sister in law she taught me English so cause I knew nothing but Spanish and she was umm white and she was like "oh no she's like I'm going to teach you English" so then

I learned English before kinder and they put me in an English class and ever since then it's just like been like English English. (Interview, May 21, 2020).

Giovana's story indicates that because her sister-in-law taught her English before entering kindergarten, she was placed in an all English program once she was enrolled in school. Therefore, she never received formal instruction in Spanish.

Estela expresses:

[Acquisition of the Spanish Language] Yeah well, yeah no never because I was never in a dual language program or language immersion. They wanted to take me out and put me in ESOL because I did school here in Florida. So, ESOL is Spanish speaking and um they (parents) ended up not doing that, they wanted me to just go straight into English and I did. The whole time, yeah. So, I never had like the actual, like this is how you write Spanish, this is how you speak Spanish, it just came very natural to me because of church because my parents spoke it, speak it perfectly, my grandparents, everyone around me.

Estela shares that she never received formal Spanish instruction because she was placed in an all English program. She attended elementary school in Florida, and in Florida, they only offered the ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages).

Estela: When I grew up in Florida there was only a program called ESOL so if you were in ESOL program teaching you that maybe spoke Spanish and that could communicate with you, but I wasn't in the program. My mom wanted me to do school in English and at home Spanish and so it was very difficult. There were times where I didn't know what to say I didn't know anything.

Estela shares that she received all of her instruction in English since she began her schooling journey, indicating that she never received Spanish instruction.

Researcher expresses:

When entering kindergarten, I was placed into a bilingual program where I was split between two teachers, one who taught me English, and one who taught me Spanish. I excelled in my English acquisition so much that by the time I reached the end of second grade, I was placed in a Gifted and Talented class and exited from the bilingual program. Between third and fourth grade, all of the instruction I received was all in English. Therefore, after reflecting on my Spanish development, I can state that my Spanish academic language came to a halt at the end of the second grade and spent the next two years learning in English. My Spanish language was then only utilized at home when speaking to my parents.

The researcher shares that she received instruction in a bilingual program until the second grade. After that, because she had learned English very quickly, she was exited out of the program. This stopped her development of the Spanish language in an academic setting.

Researcher expresses:

They also often seemed embarrassed when they could not give a complete message in Spanish, and yet they were trying to become bilingual teachers. I recall having conversations with them and them sharing that they never really were required to speak in Spanish in an academic setting. They grew up speaking Spanish to their parents, but that was it. They had not been required to read or write in Spanish because they had

attended an English-only program. They had not had the opportunity to develop their native language in an academic setting like I had.

The researcher shares her experience with her colleagues once she became a teacher. She had several colleagues who could speak the Spanish language but had pursued regular education certification. When the researcher questioned their decision to not become bilingual teachers, they shared that they had never received formal instruction in their native language and did not feel qualified to teach in their native language. The reason was that they had not had the opportunity to attend a bilingual program or a dual language program growing up. Thus, showing the importance of providing programs that promote biliteracy in the K-12 setting.

At one point one of the participants expresses that she does not feel proficient in English nor in Spanish, and she especially doubts her Spanish writing. All of the participants express receiving little to no formal instruction in Spanish. If more schools in the K-12 schooling system promoted programs where biliteracy was the focus, we would have more students that were proficient not only in English but also in Spanish. This would allow students who want to become bilingual teachers in the future to feel more confident in their Spanish proficiency and more prepared to take the BTLPT.

Unfortunately, this is not the case for many students in the K-12 schooling system.

Theme #3 The Participants Noted the Importance of Promoting Pride in Culture and the Native Language at an Early Age

All of the participants shared their stories, and one commonality that was evident is that each of them had become adults and realized that their language and culture were connected. They each also learned to value their language and culture more and more as

they grew older. One participant mentioned that she wishes her mother would have instilled that pride and love for her language and culture at an early age, and perhaps that would have changed her perspective and value of her identity. The following are some of the stories shared by the participants and their perspective on how pride in culture and the native language might have changed their perspectives on their identity.

Carolina expresses:

Like I think of myself now like an embarrassing thing to have ever thought that way but it's just like I'm trying to do my best to make up for that loss of time and value the language and my culture and have pride in being Latin. (Interview, May 29, 2020)

Carolina shares that now that she realizes that the Spanish language is important in her life and career, she is embarrassed to once have denied her language and culture. Her response also indicates that she believes it is important to value and have pride in being a Latina.

Carolina expresses:

I mean now I just study. I mean today I just study study because uh you know I can't I can't be what I once was at the beginning of my whole college career, but it's been a journey. I will never forget that first day, Dr. Guerra had us standing up in class and presenting and I was like what is this? I wanted to die. But it's very good because now I have this immense pride for being Latin and Hispanic. And I shut down any child that dares put down the Latin culture or any culture I am 100% against that because it truly affects you and I'm like the living proof of what that does to you. (Interview, May 23, 2020).

Carolina shares that once she began her bilingual college courses, she was able to encounter many other Latina women who were also pursuing a bilingual certification. She shares the feeling of wanting to die because she had never presented in Spanish. However, after that experience, she realizes that it was so important to her to be able to do so because she now has an immense pride of being a Hispanic Latina. She also shares that she deems important to make sure she shares that pride with any child that puts down the Latinx culture because it can truly affect you.

Carolina expresses:

So I just want to add to what you all are saying so I feel like we've all been in similar situations but as we grow older I'm guessing we are all realizing like how amazing we are because we speak a second language whether it's butchered or not and that our culture is like amazing and it makes us who we are. But I really believe that we grew up in like America the way that they perceive foreigners, or I guess if your skin is not white and you don't have colored eyes or blonde hair like you're labeled as a foreigner. So, I feel like that's what we grew up with and so it's like we're like I have dark hair and darker skin I'm Latin it's embarrassing it's not as great as white but in reality it's like everything that we are is amazing but I feel like history or the way that history plays itself or what we learn in school it's all about oh the whites came to America the whites took over it they killed the Native Americans like white this white that and you grow up and it shows it's all white white white and so I feel like that's where our like as a Hispanic I was embarrassed to be Hispanic. So, I feel like that all derived from it all being white all around me when white people have also come from different parts of the world

and they're all foreigners too even though they might just be third, fourth, fifth generation. You know like they're foreigners as well and you know I just feel like there's like this stigmatism if you're Latin we have to just fit in we have to learn English when in reality we need to just our culture and everything is just it's awesome that's what makes us who we are and we've let it oppress us which has now led us to be adults and like we struggle with the Spanish. I mean I don't know; I specifically struggle with the Spanish and it pisses me off! I mean I think Giovana mentioned how she wished that she spoke Spanish as her dominant language and literally that is what I wish every day and it bothers me. I feel like it just angers me that I did not have that and it's because my mom also didn't my mom should've... not that my mom didn't raise me well or anything like that but like the pride in your culture and the pride that you have in being Hispanic it needs to be transferred into your children and transferred at a young age because everything around you is going to be like this this no don't do this... but if you have that pride in you. My mom was afraid she's a foreigner you know she didn't like she was afraid literally my mom still doesn't go out anywhere because she's in a foreign country, so I just feel like that was just kind of transferred unto us. I don't know I just feel like there's just that... that's what lead us to not be or not embrace the Latinness in us early on or something like that and now it's like we need it in our careers. You know like in our jobs. (Interview, May 29, 2020).

Carolina shares her own experience with the Spanish language and the Latinx culture growing up. She expresses that she wishes her mother would have instilled the love and pride for her language and culture at an early age. She believes that because she

grew up in an environment where everything revolved around the white population, she felt she needed to fit in and neglected her own culture. She describes this as being the cause for her not to embrace her Latina culture and language.

Carolina expresses:

[Language connection to Culture] I believe that language is connected to your culture and that's what brings you closer to your family and who you can identify yourself with. If you lose the sense of culture of language which I feel like I had in high school/ early college it kind of leaves you at a standstill of who am I? Like what do I stand for where do I come from and you're filled with conflictedness.

So, I believe language and culture have a lot to do with one another. (Interview, May 27, 2020)

Carolina's story indicates that language is closely connected to culture. Carolina shares that language is what brings you closer to family and your identity. She also shares that when you lose your sense of language you also lose your sense of culture, which is what she had experienced in her high school and early college years. This indicates that students need to find pride in their language and culture at an early age because this might support them in the development of their native language.

Carolina expresses:

It all began with head start and I remember I had this... I literally to this day I can remember that anger like I hated head start and I can't really remember why but I remember I think it was a teacher and I think the teacher just highly just disliked me I don't know if it's because I spoke Spanish or I don't know what it was... but I literally remember my last day of Head Start, and I don't even know why I still

remember this but I remember my last day of Head Start I was sitting at a table away from her, she wanted all of us to go to circle time and I refused. I was like “I’m not going, I’m going to kindergarten! I’m not going to be here anymore!” So, I hated that woman. How do you know this as a four-year-old? I think it was because of that, like my experience as a Spanish speaker and how it’s frowned upon but it’s like it’s not frowned upon you’re frowned upon for being monolingual! It’s awesome to be bilingual or trilingual you’re frowned upon monolingual...

Carolina shares that now that she reflects back on her experiences with the Spanish language, she recalls having a Head Start teacher that she felt disliked her perhaps because she spoke Spanish. Carolina expresses that her initial view of other people’s perspective of Spanish speakers affected her. She shares that she felt frowned upon because she spoke Spanish. Her response indicates that if she would have been instilled with pride in the Spanish language perhaps she would not have denied her Spanish language and her culture.

Giovana expresses:

[Stopped developing the Spanish language] I believe once I got to like maybe third grade around there is when I would hardly speak Spanish, so mainly it was just English umm when I talked to my siblings it was in English. My mom I would talk to her in Spanish but it wasn’t like you know it was just it wasn’t like I didn’t really have like conversations with her like it was just like and if I did I would say little words in Spanish and then I would talk a lot in English so it was just like Spanglish with her and she knew nothing but Spanish and so then I

would even tell her like mom you need to I don't know if you remember but when they used to have oh what was that program called Ingles Sin Barreras I was like mom you need that because you need to learn English.

Gioavana shares that she stopped developing the Spanish language around the third grade because she would hardly speak it. When she did use the Spanish language with her mother, it was a mixture of English and Spanish, and she would tell her mother that she was the one that needed to learn English and not the other way around.

Giovana: [Connection between language and culture] Yes, I think that the Spanish language is a big part of our culture! So, umm I think it is very important to you know not forget about our culture's language. Now I talk to my mom in nothing but Spanish now I don't talk to her in English anymore. Our conversations are always in Spanish. Our family when we get together the majority of our conversations are in English but like let's say mom is in the kitchen doing something and like my brothers and my sisters are together we speak in English but as soon as she comes with us like if we're in the living room or the dining table we all start to speak in Spanish so that we can involve her. So, I think it's very important it's part of our culture. Because it's just a part of who I am it's my culture. I am very proud of my culture I am proud of being a Latina Mexican it's just no I love it. I just think it's very important. (Interview, May 25, 2020).

Giovana shares her perspective between language and culture. She believes that the Spanish language is a big part of her culture. She expresses that it is imperative not to forget your native language. She talks about her transition from when she was a child to being an adult and the language that she chooses to speak. Before she would speak to her

mother mostly in English but now that she understands the importance of her native language and the significance it has for her she makes an effort to speak to her mother and in front of her mother in her native language.

Giovana expresses:

[Transitioning to use Spanish more as an adult] I do now, I guess because we're older, so we know the importance that it's part of our culture so now we try to speak Spanish more. I also try to like text in Spanish more just so I can get more practice. Also, with my family I when we get together with my sisters and brothers I mean we always speak English but my mom she knows very little English so whenever she's around we all try to speak Spanish, so I think that helps too. I also speak to my mom in nothing but Spanish. Before when I was younger I would speak to her in English and then she would tell me "no hablame en Español" ("no speak to me in Spanish") and I'd be like "no mom, tu tienes que aprender el Inglés" "no mom you have to learn English") haha and now it's like I regret it. I wish I should've just stuck with Spanish. (Interview, May 29, 2020).

In this part of her story, Giovana shares that she regrets not holding on to her Spanish language as a child. Now that she realizes the importance of the language and how it is connected to her culture she chooses to speak Spanish as much as possible. Her response indicates that promoting pride and culture at an early age would have made a difference for her.

Estela expresses:

[Connection between language and culture] So, if they took away Spanish from me, I'd only be holding on to my American traditions and so like the things I've

done here. I wouldn't but I don't think I'd be able to like link my family and I don't know it would be it would be really weird because a lot of the a lot of what I do is all in Spanish, you know, like just being able to be with my family and communicate with them I would lose that. So yeah, I definitely do think that a lot of my culture would be taken away from me. (Interview, May 25, 2020).

Estela shares that if the Spanish language were to be taken away from her, perhaps she would lose all of her Latinx traditions and only hold on to her American traditions. She shares that she believes the Spanish language is closely connected to her culture because it is what she uses to communicate with her family. Estela's response indicates the importance of promoting pride in language and culture.

The researcher shares:

I recall having a cousin who did attend Pre-K and she had learned the English language in Pre-K. I remember the chatter between my mother and my aunts about my cousin learning English and how proud they were of her. I still had no clue how to hold a conversation in English. It was a bit embarrassing for me that I was not able to speak or read English and my cousin that was my same age did. That moment marked me even though I did not realize it.

The researcher shares her own experience as a child. She recalls her family members being proud of her cousin's acquisition of the second language. To the researcher, that was a moment that she kept to herself. At that moment she realized that learning English was something to be very proud of and an accomplishment. The same pride was not shown for the native language, and this is an action that is quite common for Hispanic families.

The researcher expresses:

After arriving in Mexico at the age of ten and spending five years in Mexico. I was able to develop my academic language in Spanish. Through the immersion of the language I was also able to immerse myself in the culture of Mexico. I felt privileged that I had not just developed academically but also culturally. I became very proud of my roots and wanted to share it with the rest of my family.

The researcher shares her own experience with language. She shares that it was not until she was immersed in the language and her culture through her surroundings that she started feeling pride towards her own language and culture. When she understood that it was something to be proud of, she wanted to share what she knew and had learned with the rest of her family in the United States, similar to the participants' reactions.

The participants share their experiences with pride in language and culture. Two of the participants shared that their families seemed to really value the fact that they were acquiring their second language even if that meant that their native language usage would decline. This seemed to make a difference in their lives and in their decisions to continue to practice and use their native language.

Theme #4 The Participants Noted the Significance of Offering Further Instruction of the Academic Language to Promote Native Language Development for Bilingual Education Students in the Higher Education Setting

All three of the participants shared the lack of opportunity that they had growing up to practice the academic Spanish language. All three participants expressed that they would have benefitted from more exposure to the academic language in the higher academic setting being

that they did not receive that opportunity in the K-12 schooling system. The following are some of their narrations.

Carolina expresses:

I don't think I have [converse at a high academic level in Spanish] and right now I'm trying to read academic books in Spanish I mean I guess my first introduction to academic level Spanish was with Dr. Guerra at the local university so that was my first experience with that and then now with that being my career and me having to teach Spanish right now in a dual language classroom I mean I'm studying a lot so that I can teach those kids well. (Interview, May 23, 2020).

Carolina's experience indicates that she had never had the opportunity to practice her Spanish language in an academic setting until she reached the university courses that were meant to prepare her to become a bilingual teacher. She shares that she continues to practice now to ensure that she prepares her students well.

Carolina: [Recommendation to the college of education as an undergraduate student to help you be more successful with the BLPT]To have maybe a course that's dedicated to listening, speaking, reading, writing only in Spanish that provides you with strategies and practice of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. I think that a semester of that would be really helpful but then also I think having listening, speaking, reading, and writing throughout all of the bilingual courses would be extremely beneficial to all students. I know it would have helped me a lot. (Interview, May 23, 2020)

Carolina shares that as an undergraduate student she would have benefitted from a course that was dedicated to practicing the four language domains listening, speaking,

reading, and writing in Spanish. She expresses this would have helped her development of the Spanish language since she was a student who did not receive formal Spanish instruction in the K-12 school system.

Carolina: [Specifics on what she would have benefitted from at the university's bilingual program] I would say speaking activities about educational information, speaking activities about a lesson or maybe just even speaking activities about frogs, dogs, I don't know maybe just something very simple kind of like the ranges of the ELPS you know you have the beginner, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high. So, it's just basically like basic speaker activities and then you transition into advanced high speaker activities which would be at an academic level of Spanish. Just beginner speaker, so that the people who speak at different levels can just begin to feel comfortable in however you would teach that. That would be the speaking part, maybe like listening having conversations, like let's say I'm a beginner Spanish speaker and I'm talking with you and you're an advanced high Spanish speaker so I'm just listening to you and then I have to write down what you're talking about or what I understood, the gist of what it is the story that you're telling me about. Reading would be, I would start off with basic reading levels, just to get that going and then slowly transition to more like article like reading and same thing with the writing just very basic like sentence stems and then transition to more advanced writing, because writing is the scariest part. Even when you're learning English I'm still scared of that, so the Spanish is just very scary. (Interview, May 29, 2020).

Carolina shares specifics of what she would suggest the college of education to include in their preparation courses for students pursuing a bilingual education degree. Her response indicates that if she would have had this opportunity to further develop her Spanish language skills in an academic setting, her Spanish proficiency would have improved.

Giovana expresses:

[Suggestions for the college of education] I think that it would have helped me more is like if they in college if they would have prepared us more with that academic language that Spanish academic language. I think that would have helped me being more prepared when taking the test (BTLPT). (Interview, May 21, 2020).

Giovana shares that her Spanish development and proficiency would have improved if she would have received more practice in the academic language in her bilingual preparation courses. She believes that would have helped her be more prepared to take her BTLPT.

Estela: [The use of the academic Spanish language] Well if you are referring to academic like strictly school, like in that setting, then I would say no because my school was always in English but in Church I feel like you have to speak um I don't know if it would make sense for me to say quote on quote in an academic with like vocabulary you know it's not just "casa" "carro" you have to be able to express what you are feeling and what you are saying properly so that everyone can understand. So, in that sense I do think that I have spoken Spanish at a more academic level. Well the class that I took for the BTLPT which was your class,

um I feel like yeah we even had to record ourselves saying things that I mean they weren't super high up there but you have to be able to express yourself at a timely manner and be able to get your point across in Spanish. So I think that that was one of the places where we did a little bit more of that and then um, um I taught a lesson in Spanish to children so that was also, yeah you know you have to use some vocabulary not just, you have to know pronombre you know, all that jazz. So, I do think that in that sense maybe but other than that I don't remember a lot of like one on one, I mean academic Spanish speaking times or anything like that. (Interview, May 21, 2020).

Estela shares that she would have benefitted from courses in the university that prepared her with basic grammatical instruction. Estela shares that she attended K-12 schooling in English only and believes that if she would have received more basic grammatical instruction at the university then her Spanish, she would have benefitted from this.

Estela: [Which language is stronger English or Spanish?] English simply because I feel like my vocabulary like if I'm writing I have a bigger broader vocabulary than if I were speaking in Spanish. I can speak to you in Spanish and I can find my ways of saying things however because it's not an academic, I don't think it's an academic level my language or my my vocabulary is going to be a little bit more rudimentary and Yeah, I wouldn't I think if I had to say which one I were stronger in definitely English. Unless, I'm speaking like a Cuban and that's really weird. That probably makes no sense but for example there's words that Cubans

use ways of saying things that are super wrong super incorrect they're not like how things are said or anything like that in that case I'm very very fluent and I'm fairly strong. I know when things are incorrect or when things are said wrong, but I think I'm definitely stronger in English than I would be in Spanish. (Interview, May 25, 2020).

Estela shares that she believes she is stronger in the English language because she has not had much experience interacting in formal academic Spanish. Her response indicates that because she has not had the opportunity to practice the Spanish academic language as much, she might benefit from more exposure to this in the academic setting. This will support her preparation for her BTLPT and also for the delivery of instruction in the classroom setting in the near future.

Estela: I don't want to say starting the basics like, I don't mean like starting from zero like I said before "yo me llamo Estela". Like that's very rudimentary you should have learned that in kindergarten. But I just mean like the basic things that are very important for us as teachers to know. For example, the accents in Spanish. You were the only teacher that I ever had that taught me how to properly write accents, where to write them, and I feel like those are the types of things that when we go into a classroom if we have a kid that came directly from Mexico and is super good at writing and speaking Spanish that's when we're going to be like "maestra no se escribe así se escribe" and I'm like uhhh yeah you're right because I don't know I have to go out of my way to figure out how to write the accents. To where I think that it would be amazing if the school were to come and show us things like that. That would be important for us to know when we're in a

classroom. There are certain words in Spanish that... well just like in English but I'm going to give an example like the "H" use "hacer" and I know it sounds super dumb but I feel like if they explained some of the grammatical things in Spanish to us we would not feel as intimidated going into a classroom with a bunch of Spanish speaking kids who have Spanish speaking parents and looking at us like we have no idea what we're doing as people who have just graduated to do this. You know if I had graduated just to be a regular teacher and then I have to go out of my way on my own to learn something in Spanish to be able to teach a certain group of kids then I would think it's ok to for me to make mistakes or feel as though I'm not up to par or up to the expectation but being that I graduated with a bilingual certification, I think it's really important for us to know everything before going in there and sometimes some of the things that we're lacking is some very basic stuff. We're able to speak it, we're going to make mistakes here and there but then when it comes to the nitty gritty teaching little kids how to do it? I feel...in my case those are things I was never really taught. Like I mentioned to you, I learned how to speak and write and read pretty much on my own because I didn't have that bilingual program in Florida so obviously when I do it now then I have some mistakes in there and I'm not going to necessarily be able to explain to a kid why a word is "esdrújula" if I don't even know that you know. So those are sort of like the basic things that I mean that I feel that would really help. I had another teacher two semesters ago and she was like "this isn't part of the class but I'm just going to go ahead and explain to you guys how to do this and she... showed us some tips and tricks in Spanish that would help us as teachers. The fact

that that wasn't in the curriculum and she went out of her way to incorporate that because she saw it as something very important I think said something. She saw the need for us as teachers, as Hispanics, bilingual teachers to learn those things and therefore she put it in there, but it isn't something that is required for these teachers to teach if that makes sense. (Interview, May 29, 2020).

Estela shares a bit about her experience in her bilingual courses at the university. Her response indicates her appreciation for the professors that took the time to implement some basic grammatical lessons into their curriculum. She shares that one of her professors made it clear that the particular lesson she was teaching was not necessarily in the curriculum but she deemed it important that they learn those basic skills. She also shares that the course she took with the researcher was the first time she had ever received instruction about where accent marks were supposed to be written in the Spanish language, and it was also the first time she had ever received formal instruction in Spanish. Estela shares that she would appreciate more courses that would prepare her for her future role as a bilingual teacher by supporting her Spanish language proficiency.

Researcher: As I had been grading the work of my students from the local university throughout the past semester, I had really noticed that some of my students would still need further support as they continued to pursue their career in bilingual education. I knew I had several students who could benefit from taking my BTLPT test prep course for another semester or at least a course similar to this one that really prepared their Spanish proficiency. I continued to wonder what other things we could do as the College of Education to continue to support their success.

In her story, the researcher shares that her experience working with the local university's students in preparation for the BTLPT has shown her that several of her students would continue to need more support in preparation for this exam. She believes that more exposure to lessons such as the ones provided in a BTLPT test prep course might continue to support and benefit students as they prepare to take their exam. Her point of view seemed to correlate with that of the participants, making it one of the emergent themes for this study.

The responses from the participants and the researcher continually showed that students wanted and needed more opportunities for formal grammatical preparation in the Spanish language to further support their studies. One particular student shared that if she was graduating with a bilingual certification, then her expectation and that of the parents of the students she would teach would be for her to be proficient in the Spanish language, and she worried about that.

Chapter V

Looking Forward

At the initiation of this study, I hoped to find answers to my inquiry by looking through what Clandinin and Connelly term as *continuity* the past, present, and future of these stories (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). The four collections of stories retold in this narrative study have allowed for some answers to my initial inquiry to come forward. There is still much to be researched in the area of native language attrition among bilingual education students. There is still much to be done. The previous chapters presented an introduction to the study, a literature review, the methodology, and the findings that came out of our stories. The following chapter will present the implications as well as the opportunities for future research.

Study Overview

...Our principal interest in experience is the growth and transformation in the life story that we as researchers and our participants author. Therefore, difficult as it may be to tell a story, the more difficult but important task is the retelling of stories that allow for growth and change (Clandinin and Connelly, p. 71, 2000).

The sole purpose of this study has been to retell the stories of those bilingual education students who have grown up in the United States and have suffered from native language attrition along the way, in order to find the reasoning behind this occurrence and what these stories can teach us for us to grow and change from these experiences.

In this study, the researcher has interviewed three bilingual education students and has re-storied their experiences in this investigation. The researcher has also retold her own story to find connections between the experiences of the participants and her own

experiences. The data gathered through this study has been analyzed and coded for emergent themes. The goal is to relive the stories of the participants and the researcher to move forward with changes that can better support future bilingual education students.

Discussion

The interviews conducted with the three participants and the researcher's journaling provided perceptions of the causes of native language attrition and how this has affected the bilingual education students. These stories provided ideas from which we can continue to grow and change. The following sections postulate discussions and implications from the four emergent themes in the findings.

Theme #1 The Participants Noted that Students are Influenced by the Environment Regarding the Use of the Native Language

One of the emergent themes from this study was that students are often influenced by their environments. Language is a concept that plays a vital role in the lives of people. As Branum-Martin, Mehta, Carlos, Francis, and Goldenberg (2014) share, children who speak two languages have particular preferences for one language over the other when they speak to specific individuals. This is certainly a concept that was portrayed in the lives of the three participants in this study. All three participants stated that they chose a specific language over the other depending on their environment. The people that they interacted with and the perception of the languages that those people had, influenced their personal use of a specific language. In other words, if they were surrounded by people who appreciated their native language and also used it they felt comfortable using it. If they were surrounded by people who underappreciated the language or felt that their native language was perceived in a condescending way then, they avoided speaking it.

This leads us conclude that students might be influenced by the perceptions that others have of their native language. Therefore, it is important that students can perceive positive perceptions of their native language throughout their lives in order to promote the use of the native language.

Theme #2 The Participants Noted that there is a Need for K-12 Schooling Systems to Offer Programs that Promote Biliteracy

An additional emergent theme in this study was that our schooling systems need bilingual programs in which biliteracy is promoted. Davin and Heineke (2018) share the need for administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders to make efforts to increase student's access to biliteracy. This deemed to be true in the stories of both the participants and the researcher. Our country's diversity continues to grow more and more. The need for biliterate professionals consequently continues to grow. From the participants' stories and that of the researcher we can conclude that if biliterate programs would have been offered throughout their schooling journey then perhaps reading and writing proficiency in both English and Spanish would have been achieved. The participants shared their lack of formal Spanish instruction in their early schooling years, which blocked their growth in their native language. Therefore, the existence of programs in which both development in the native language and the second language occurs throughout the K-12 schooling system is essential.

Theme #3 The Participants Noted the Importance of Promoting Pride in Culture and the Native Language at an Early Age

Through the conducted interviews, it was evident that the parents' promotion of pride in the native language and culture influenced the use of the native language. Kabuto (2018) shares that parents' choices impact the practices of children's attitudes around bilingualism and the paths that they might take in becoming bilingual and biliterate. This is a theme that was also true in all three of the participant's stories. One participant, in particular, shared the importance that her parents placed on the Spanish language but placed her in an English-only program at school. The other two participants shared that their parents did not promote pride in the native language but focused on the importance of acquiring the second language. This action proved to impact their choices in becoming biliterate. Both of these students express their regret in not using their language as much as they should have, and that becoming a barrier when trying to become bilingual certified teachers. We can conclude that it is important that those that surround bilingual children promote pride in becoming biliterate; this is especially true for parents.

Theme #4 The Participants Noted the Significance of Offering Further Instruction of the Academic Language to Promote Native Language Development for Bilingual Education Students in the Higher Education Setting

Offering further instruction of the academic language to promote native language development is of utmost importance for students who are pursuing a bilingual teacher certification. Arroyo-Romano (2016) shares that we must not forget that the idea of being bilingual does not necessarily mean that a person is literate or is trained in the language.

This is true for many bilingual education students who are pursuing a bilingual teacher certification. The BTLPT exam thoroughly evaluates the proficiency of the student's Spanish language. This has caused many students who pursue the degree to realize that their Spanish proficiency is not at the required level to pass the BTLPT. In this study, the participants shared this experience. Two of the participants failed to pass the exam on the first try, one persisted three times until she passed, the other is currently in remedial courses in hopes that she will pass the second time. The third participant is hesitant to take the exam, she shared that she is scared to take it because many of her friends have failed it. The participants shared that they would have appreciated further instruction in the academic Spanish language in their university courses in order to support their Spanish proficiency.

Conclusions and Implications for Bilingual Teacher Certification University Programs

The participants and the researcher shared the idea that university programs should spend more time providing grammatical and formal Spanish instruction in the course load provided for bilingual education teacher candidates. Therefore, it is encouraged that bilingual certification programs offer opportunities for students who need more support in the Spanish language to attend courses in which basic grammatical and academic Spanish language instruction is provided. It is also important to complete a diagnostic evaluation for students' Spanish language proficiency to be upfront with students about their language development. This will allow students to know and understand that just because they are able to hold conversations in the native language does not necessarily mean that they are proficient in all four domains of the language

(reading, listening, speaking, and writing). It is also critical that multiple opportunities are provided for students so that they can consistently practice the four language domains throughout their course work. Hernandez and Alfaro (2019) share that candidates who currently want to pursue a bilingual certification come to the bilingual teacher preparation programs with a variety of Spanish proficiency. Hernandez and Alfaro (2019) also share that the bilingual teacher preparation programs may not have the time or faculty resources to bring candidates up to the academic Spanish proficiency level required to pass exams such as the BTLPT. These are implications that must be considered in response to this research. Bilingual education teacher preparation programs might need more support from the K-12 schooling system in order to help students who plan to become bilingual educators to continue to develop their native language proficiency.

Recommendations for Future Study

This narrative inquiry aimed to understand the perceptions of bilingual education students' causes for native language attrition and what the university programs could do to support their success in the BTLPT. The participants shared that they would like more formal instruction in the native language throughout their college courses. The research leans itself to inquire about the specific needs that a broader group of bilingual teacher candidates might have to further support them through our university programs.

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Appendix A

Researcher Journal Entries

Jacqueline Aguilar Researcher Reflective Journal Entries	
Reflection	Coding
<p>Journal Entry #1 Beginning of BTLPT test prep course.</p> <p>As I gave my introduction course and requested introductions from students I was able to listen to their Spanish proficiency just by listening to an introduction. In my head I divided my students into three categories, students who I thought might be successful on the first try, students who might struggle but would pass perhaps on the second try, and students who had a small chance or no chance of being successful unless more Spanish development occurred. I could already tell which students might have a higher chance to be successful on the BTLPT exam even before taking the course. I could also tell which students might struggle to pass the exam a bit more and which have a very small chance of passing it. The students who had a high chance of being successful had an opportunity to develop their Spanish language at an early age. They attended school in a Spanish speaking country where they were completely immersed in the language. The students who had a chance to pass the exam but might struggle were students who learned Spanish as their first language in the United States but were only given a small opportunity to develop their Spanish in an academic setting. The students who I classified with a small chance to pass the exam were students who learned Spanish but did not have much practice, not even in their homes, they were second or third generation</p>	<p>Amount of academic Spanish exposure at home and at school was very small.</p> <p>Second or third generation immigrants.</p>

immigrants.	
<p>Journal Entry #2 Looking back in time</p> <p>I am a second-generation immigrant and I have been thinking about my students and how I can help them be successful in passing their BTLPT exam. As a child I remember learning Spanish as my first language. My mother and father do not speak English. Before I entered elementary school I had learned the ABCs and the numbers 1-10 in English from my older brother. I spoke pretty fluent Spanish however; I had not been exposed to academic Spanish only conversational Spanish. When I turned ten I moved to Mexico with my family. There I experienced culture shock. I recall being made fun of by my classmates by the way I spoke and wrote Spanish. I had many grammatical errors. I pronounced words wrong and I utilized a lot of anglicisms. It was difficult to understand many of the simple academic words my teacher used because I had never heard them. I had not really developed my academic skills in Spanish. In the United States I was part of the bilingual program in kindergarten through second grade. In third grade I was exited from the bilingual program into mainstream English. I had stopped developing my native language in second grade and now that I was in fifth I was expected to pick it back up. That was one of the most difficult challenges I faced.</p>	<p>Second or third generation immigrants.</p> <p>Amount of academic Spanish exposure at home and at school was very small.</p> <p>Feeling ashamed to speak in Spanish because might be made fun of.</p>
<p>Journal Entry #3</p> <p>As I read through some of Kathy Escamilla's work I found that she shares that research has clearly demonstrated positive effects for native-language instruction over English-only models.</p>	<p>Amount of academic Spanish exposure at home and at school was very small.</p>

<p>I continue to wonder why many of our school districts across the United States push for our students to acquire English but neglect Spanish development. After arriving in Mexico at the age of ten and spending five years in Mexico. I was able to develop my academic language in Spanish. Through the immersion of the language I was also able to immerse myself in the culture of Mexico. I felt privileged that I had not just developed academically but also culturally. I became very proud of my roots and wanted to share it with the rest of my family. Upon my return to the United States at the age of fifteen I found that my cousins who had grown up here and attended English only programs had lost their Spanish greatly. They even seemed ashamed to use the language because they did not feel very comfortable speaking it. Perhaps if I had not had the opportunity to study in Mexico I too would have been in the same situation. Which makes me wonder how much of a chance I would have had to become a bilingual teacher in the United States?</p> <p>Sparrow, W., Butvilofsky, S., Escamilla, K., Hopewell, S., & Tolento, T. (2014). Examining the Longitudinal Biliterate Trajectory of Emerging Bilingual Learners in a Paired Literacy Instructional Model. <i>Bilingual Research Journal</i>, 37(1), 24–42.</p>	<p>Feeling ashamed to speak in Spanish because might be made fun of.</p>
<p>Journal Entry #4</p> <p>As I entered my first bilingual preparation courses at the university I realized that I had an advantage over several of my classmates. I had been immersed in my native language and felt very comfortable speaking in Spanish. I recall several others struggling to communicate in their native language and oftentimes utilizing english as a “crutch” to get the message across when they could not think of the Spanish terms. They also often</p>	<p>Amount of academic Spanish exposure at home and at school was very small.</p> <p>Feeling ashamed to speak in Spanish because might be made fun of.</p>

<p>seemed embarrassed when they could not give a complete message in Spanish and yet they were trying to become bilingual teachers. I recall having conversations with them and them sharing that they never really were required to speak in Spanish in an academic setting. They grew up speaking Spanish to their parents but that was it. They had not been required to read or write in Spanish because they had attended an English only program. They had not had the opportunity to develop their native language in an academic setting.</p>	
<p>February 19, 2020</p> <p>I recall once in one of my bilingual courses at the university. We had to do a presentation in Spanish. One of the groups went up to present and as they spoke it was evident that some of them felt very comfortable speaking in Spanish. However, one of their teammates was really struggling. She kept using English words in her presentation when she could not figure out the Spanish word for it. It was a bit different because she did not seem to mind that she did not speak Spanish all that well. It was as if she was proud that her English was better than her Spanish. I found that very interesting because sometimes it can appear as if people are proud that they do not really speak Spanish. I attribute this to the different language ideologies that people might have. Some believe that English holds more prestige than Spanish because it is the dominant language in the United States.</p> <p>Briceño (2018), shares that Bilingual teachers often work in a broader context that devalues nondominant languages and cultures to such an extent that even students and their families may internalize a negative view of their home language, community, and culture (p. 289)</p> <p>I find this to be true in many cases and in this</p>	<p>Feeling proud to not know much Spanish but more English.</p>

<p>occasion I felt that my classmate most definitely felt that her nondominant language held a negative view and therefore felt proud that she was able to speak more fluent English than Spanish.</p> <p>Briceño, A. (2018). "En Español Esa Palabra No Tiene Ningún Sentido:" A Cross-Case Analysis of Three Mexican American Dual Language Teachers' Language Ideologies and Instructional Differences. <i>International Multilingual Research Journal</i>, 12(4), 288–301.</p>	
<p>Journal Entry #5</p> <p>When it came my time to take the Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test (BTLPT) during my undergraduate years I felt very prepared even though I had not studied the manual at all nor taken a test prep course. I was told that the exam was only to measure how well I spoke, listened, read, and wrote in Spanish. All domains in which I felt more than prepared. The university program that I went through prepared us for the bilingual content exam but provided little opportunity to prepare us for the BTLPT. However, because I had attended school in Mexico where I was immersed in the Spanish language I felt very comfortable with my level of Spanish. Three days before my exam I looked through the manual for the BTLPT to familiarize myself with the timing and the kinds of questions asked as well as the format. However, I knew several of my classmates were worried about passing the exam and were studying arduously for it on their own. I was able to pass the exam and was short thirteen points from a perfect score which equaled a 95% on a 100% scale. I was very proud of my score. I scored above three of my other classmates that I asked at the</p>	<p>Amount of academic Spanish exposure at home and at school was very small.</p>

<p>time. One of my classmates I recall had to take the exam more than one time. It was difficult for her to find a job as a bilingual teacher without passing that test.</p>	
<p>March 27, 2020</p> <p>I clearly remember an interview that I had at the campus where I taught. I had thoroughly enjoyed my experience there and my dream was to become a teacher at that campus. A position opened up at the campus and the principal there scheduled an interview with me. The interesting part of this interview was that the assistant principal was also present during my interview. The principal had asked him to attend so that he could have a conversation with me in Spanish. I felt very confident to speak in Spanish with him and I think that helped me provide adequate answers to him. During that same interview the principal asked me to rate my Spanish proficiency from a 1-10 to which I responded a 9 or 10. I did not want to sound like I knew it all but I felt very confident with my Spanish proficiency. He then also asked me to rate my English proficiency from a 1-10 to which I responded an 8 and he was surprised and asked me why? I responded well, I was immersed into the Spanish language during my middle school years and Spanish is my native language therefore I have practiced it more. I just feel like I need to develop my English a bit more. He responded to me “well I think your English sounds very good to me”. I answered, thank you. I wonder what my classmates would have answered to that question?</p>	<p>Confidence to speak Spanish because of exposure in an academic setting.</p>
<p>Journal Entry #6</p> <p>When I was in my undergraduate program and then later when I was working at the elementary level, I encountered several classmates and some colleagues who spoke Spanish but had not pursued a bilingual</p>	<p>Amount of academic Spanish exposure at home and at school was very small.</p>

<p>education. I recall asking them why they had not pursued the bilingual certification to which they responded “I just don’t think I could pass the BTLPT test, my Spanish is not that good”. A colleague responded, “well I haven’t been able to pass the BTLPT test so I decided to just teach ESL”. It has always been a question of mine of what factors influenced their loss of their native language or the reasons why they have struggled to pass that test. I also wonder if in the future they might pursue taking the BTLPT.</p>	
<p>Journal Entry #7</p> <p>Moving forward, I have been listening to my UHD students that are enrolled in a BTLPT test prep course. As I have listened to their conversations I have been trying to best prepare them to take the BTLPT exam. However, from the conversations I have heard I have noticed that several of my students might not be successful in their first try. After one of my classes one of my students approached me and told me she was very worried about the class. She came from a second-generation immigrant home. She had grown up in the United States and had mostly spoken English all of her life. She told me “I’m going to give my best effort in this class, but I don’t know if I’ll be able to pass it. I do not really speak much Spanish and I listen to my classmates and feel so lost”. In this class I had a wide range of Spanish language proficiency among my students. I had some who were very fluent Spanish speakers and several who struggled all semester. I wish there were more ways that we could support our students in the bilingual teacher preparation program.</p> <p>As I have been grading the work of my students throughout the semester, I have really noticed that some of my students will still need further support as they continue to pursue their career in bilingual education. I know I have several students who could</p>	<p>Second or third generation immigrants.</p> <p>Feeling ashamed to speak in Spanish because might be made fun of.</p> <p>Amount of academic Spanish exposure at home and at school was very small.</p>

<p>benefit from taking my BTLPT test prep course for another semester or at least a course similar to this one that really develops their Spanish proficiency. I continue to wonder what other things we could do as the College of Education to continue to support their success.</p>	
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Appendix B

Interview Questions for Research Study Meeting 1 (Individual)

1. How much Spanish did you speak at home?
2. Did you read Spanish? If yes, what did you read?
3. Did you listen to Spanish TV or music? If yes, what did you watch?
4. Did you converse at a high academic level when you were students?
5. When did you stop acquiring higher level academic Spanish skills?
6. What would it take for you to be fluent?
7. What are some recommendations for COE for you to be successful?

Interview Questions for Research Study Meeting 2 (Individual)

1. Could you provide me with some background of your family? Are you first or second-generation immigrants? Or where are your parents from? Did they always live here? Where you born here?
2. How much English do they speak?
3. Do you think your parents ever though that learning English was more important than Spanish?
4. Do you think your parents ever played a role as to how much Spanish you practiced at home?
5. Where or in what situations do you find yourself speaking more Spanish?
6. In what situations do you find yourself speaking more English?
7. What language do you choose to speak in with you friends?
8. Do you believe language is connected to your culture in any form or way?

9. Do you think if the Spanish language was taken away from you a part of your culture would be lost?
10. Which language do you consider is stronger English or Spanish?
11. Have you ever felt proud that your English is stronger?

Appendix C



Consent to Take Part in a Human Research Study

Title of research study: Native Language Attrition: A Narrative Inquiry of the Perceptions of Bilingual Education Students

Investigator: Jacqueline Aguilar jaguilar10@uh.edu 713-459-8143

Data from this action research project may be included in doctoral dissertation research being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Laveria Hutchison.

Key Information:

The following focused information is being presented to assist you in understanding the key elements of this study, as well as the basic reasons why you may or may not wish to consider taking part. This section is only a summary; more detailed information, including how to contact the research team for additional information or questions, follows within the remainder of this document under the “Detailed Information” heading.

What should I know about a research study?

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- Taking part in the research is voluntary; whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You can choose not to take part.
- You can agree to take part and later change your mind.
- Your decision will not be held against you.
- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide and can ask questions at any time during the study.

You are invited to take part in a research study about native language attrition among university level students enrolled in a bilingual teacher certification program. The only criterion for inclusion in the study is to be enrolled in the bilingual teacher certification program at the university.

In general, your participation in the research involves your participation in three interviews conducted by the researcher. In the State of Texas, bilingual teacher candidates are required to take and pass the Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test to become certified bilingual teachers. The purpose of this study is to investigate what are the causes for native language shame and loss among university level students pursuing a bilingual teacher certification. Many students in the bilingual certification program struggle to pass the exam because of their deficiency in the Spanish academic language. Insight on students’ perceptions will be acquired through audio-recorded individual and focus group interviews and in class observations. Audio-recorded interviews will be transcribed and analyzed to help the researcher further understand students’ perceptions of the causes for native language shame and loss.

Consent to Take Part in a Human Research Study

Potential Risks and Benefits

The primary risk to you in taking part is that you might feel uncomfortable being audio/recorded. You might also worry that your answers during the interviews will affect you as a student of the university. Though every effort will be made to keep confidential the data collected from this study, you might also be concerned about your privacy. Your name and identifying information will be guarded in the data analysis and will not be shared in any write-ups or discussions of the study. I will make every effort to maintain your confidentiality throughout the study. You can compare these risks to the possible benefits of improving the university program in which you are enrolled and your perceptions of your native language. You will not receive compensation for participation in this study.

Alternatives

Your alternative to taking part in this research study is not to take part.

Detailed Information:

The following is more detailed information about this study, in addition to the information listed above.

Why is this research being done?

Latino children in the United States have experienced the loss of their first language due to not having the opportunity to practice the language in their everyday lives. Even today, the loss of their native language continues to be a problem. There have been many studies conducted with the lens of second language acquisition in mind. There are many others who study children and the lack of opportunities for them to acquire their first language before acquiring a second language. This study strives to analyze the causes of adult native language loss. This study is specifically geared towards university students who strive to become bilingual educators in a country where they have not had the opportunity to master their first language. Through an analysis of the educational journey of university level students this research will inform the practices of a program geared towards bilingual education teacher preparation. Through this research study, the researcher hopes to acquire some answers that will help improve the supports provided in the bilingual teacher preparation programs.

How long will the research last?

I expect that you will be in this research study for an approximation of eight weeks. At the start of the study the researcher will meet with the participants for an initial interview as a group. The researcher will meet individually with each participant once to conduct an interview. Finally, the researcher will meet at the end with the group of participants for a final interview. The information gathered through the interviews and observations will help the researcher acquire information on how to better support the preparation of bilingual teacher candidates.

How many people will be studied?

We hope to enroll 5 bilingual teacher candidates in this research study.

Consent to Take Part in a Human Research Study

What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?

The researcher will conduct an initial interview as a group (with all of the participants). The interview should not last more than 30 minutes. This interview is meant to gather basic information of the participant's experiences as bilingual students throughout their schooling years. The researcher will also interview each participant individually to analyze for themes. These interviews should not last more than 30 minutes. Finally, the researcher will conduct a final interview at the end of the research study with all of the participants for final thoughts. This interview should also not last more than 30 minutes. These interviews will take place at the university where the participants are enrolled.

This research study includes the following component(s) where we plan to **audio record** you as the research subject:

- ☐ **I agree to be [audio recorded] during the research study.**
 - ☐ I agree that the [audio recording] can be used in publication/presentations.
 - ☐ I do not agree that the [audio recording] can be used in publication/presentations.
- ☐ **I do not agree to be [audio recorded/] during the research study.**

If you do not agree to be audio recorded you may still participate if you allow the researcher to transcribe your answers in a written document.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research?

You can choose not to take part in the research, and it will not be held against you. Choosing not to take part will involve no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you are a student, a decision to take part or not, or to withdraw from the research will have no effect on your grades or standing with the *University of Houston*.

Your alternative to taking part in this research study is not to take part.

What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?

You can leave the research at any time and it will not be held against you.

If you decide to leave the research, contact the investigator so that the investigator can withdraw the information transcribed before publication of the research study. If you decide to withdraw from the study a written explanation of the extent to which the data that has already been collected can be utilized in the study. If you decide that you do not wish to include this data in the study the researcher will remove all answers affiliated with you. If you stop being in the research, already collected data that still includes your personal information *will be* removed from the study record.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?

We do not expect any risks related to the research activities. The primary risk to you in taking part is that you might feel uncomfortable being audio/recorded and or observed. You might also worry that your answers during the interviews will affect you as a student of the university. Though every effort will be made to keep confidential the data collected from this study, you might also be concerned about your privacy. Your name and identifying information will be guarded in the data analysis and will not be shared in any write-ups or discussions of the study. I will make every effort to maintain your

Consent to Take Part in a Human Research Study

confidentiality throughout the study. You can compare these risks to the possible benefits of improving the university program in which you are enrolled and your perceptions of your native language.

Will I receive anything for being in this study?

There will be no incentives or remuneration for participation in this study.

Will being in this study help me in any way?

We cannot promise any benefits to you or others from your taking part in this research. However, possible benefits include the improvement of support for current and future bilingual teacher candidates at the university level. The results from this research could allow for an improvement of the instruction provided to bilingual teacher candidates. Other educators might benefit from reading the results of the research study in order to continue to improve instruction at the university level.

What happens to the information collected for the research?

Efforts will be made to keep your personal information private, including research study, to people who have a need to review this information. Each subject's name will be paired with a code number, which will appear on all written study materials. The list pairing the subject's name to the code number will be kept separate from these materials. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and other representatives of this organization, as well as collaborating institutions and federal agencies that oversee our research.

We may share and/or publish the results of this research. However, unless otherwise detailed in this document, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

Can I be removed from the research without my OK?

The person in charge of the research study can remove you from the research study without your approval. Possible reasons for removal include not attending meeting dates or otherwise by your request.

Who can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, please contact Dr. Laveria Hutchison, faculty sponsor, at lhutchison@uh.edu or (713) 743-4958.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the University of Houston Institutional Review Board (IRB). You may also talk to them at (713) 743-9204 or cphs@central.uh.edu if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research subject.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

May we contact you regarding future research opportunities?

Consent to Take Part in a Human Research Study

In the future, our research team may be interested in contacting you for other research studies we undertake, or to conduct a follow-up study to this one. There is never any obligation to take part in additional research. Do we have permission to contact you to provide additional information?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Consent to Take Part in a Human Research Study
Signature Block for Capable Adult

Your signature documents your consent to take part in this research.

_____ Signature of subject	_____ Date
_____ Printed name of subject	
_____ Signature of person obtaining consent	_____ Date
_____ Printed name of person obtaining consent	